

# Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Life

Translated with notes and introduction by  
GILLIAN CLARK



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Cover illustration: coin from Samos, mid-third century AD, showing Pythagoras.

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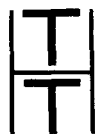


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Volume 8

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GILLIAN CLARK

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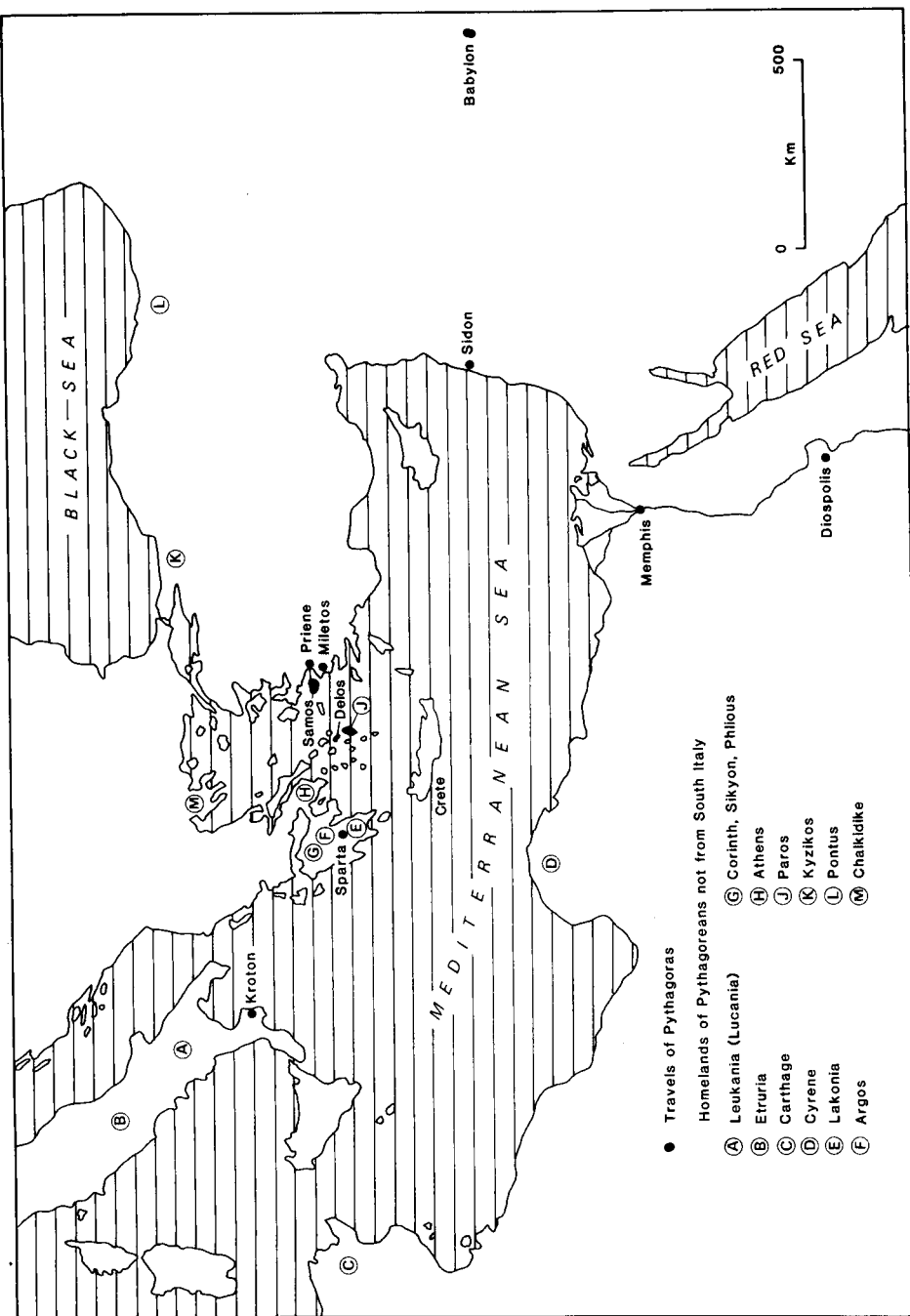
## CONTENTS

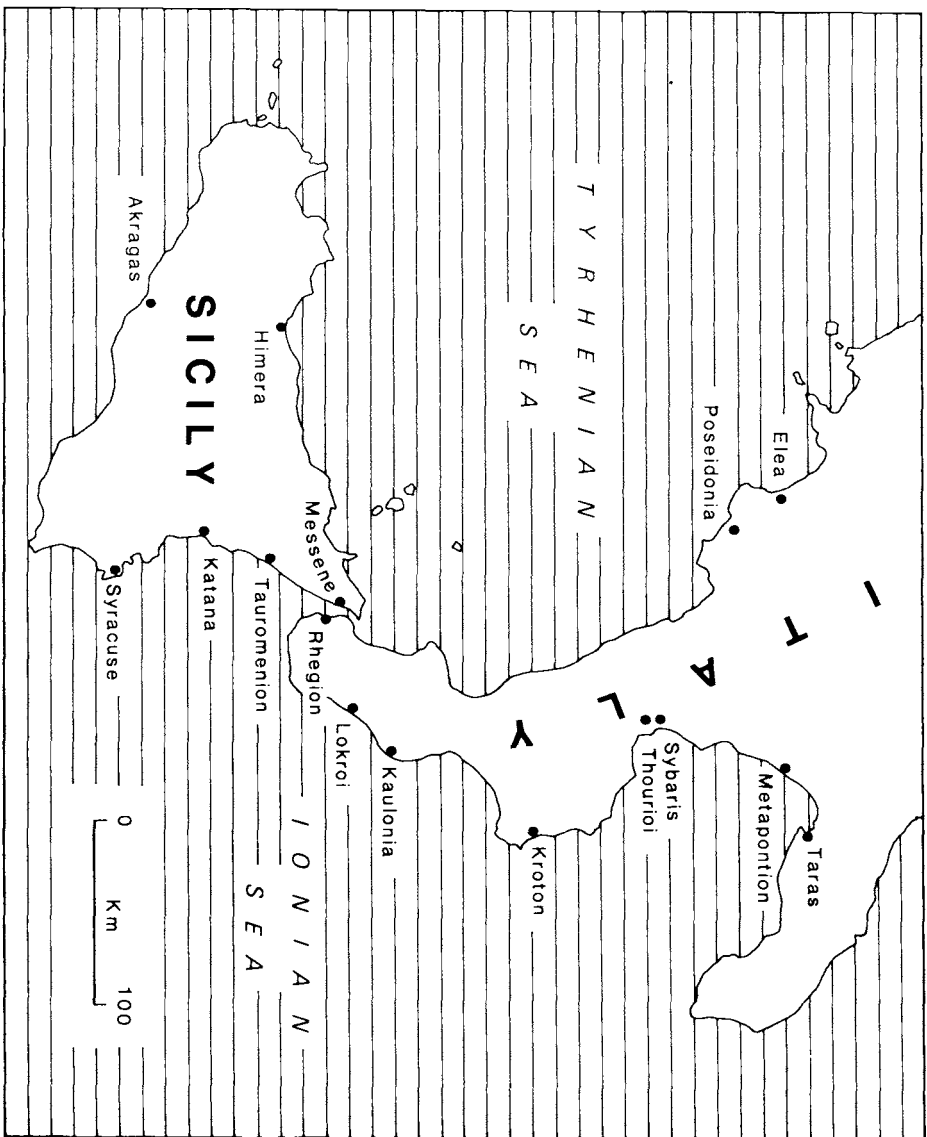
|                            |      |
|----------------------------|------|
| Abbreviations              | vi   |
| Map 1                      | vii  |
| Map 2                      | viii |
| Introduction               | ix   |
| Text                       | 1    |
| Bibliography               | 114  |
| Index of people and places | 117  |

## ABBREVIATIONS

(These are standard abbreviations for periodicals and works of reference. For abbreviations of book-titles, see the Bibliography.)

|      |                                                                                 |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ANRW | Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, ed.H.Temporini (1972- )             |
| GRBS | Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies                                              |
| JHS  | Journal of Hellenic Studies                                                     |
| JRS  | Journal of Roman Studies                                                        |
| JTS  | Journal of Theological Studies                                                  |
| LSJ  | Liddell-Scott-Jones, Greek-English Lexicon                                      |
| PLRE | Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, ed.<br>A. H. M. Jones (Cambridge 1971) |
| REA  | Revue des Etudes Anciennes                                                      |
| REG  | Revue des Etudes Grecques                                                       |
| RhM  | Rheinisches Museum                                                              |
| TAPA | Transactions of the American Philological Association                           |





## INTRODUCTION

Why should Iamblichus, a Platonist philosopher of the fourth century AD, write about Pythagoras, a pre-Platonic philosopher or sage or religious genius of the sixth century B.C.? It was neither an easy nor an obvious task. Nobody was sure what exactly Pythagoras had taught, let alone what (if anything) he had written. Nor is it likely that there was a widespread desire to know more about him. A few philosophers in the early centuries AD were counted as Pythagorean, because of their concern with number as an organising principle of the universe, and a few people were “Pythagorean” in the popular sense: they were vegetarian, or they believed in reincarnation. But there was no major Pythagorean revival, and any need for information had recently been met by Iamblichus’s senior contemporary Porphyry. Porphyry’s *Life of Pythagoras* was not a special study, but part of a four-book history of philosophy from Homer to Plato. Iamblichus’s book is also, conventionally, known as the *Life of Pythagoras* (hence the standard abbreviation VP, from *de vita Pythagorica*), but that is a misleading translation. He uses, but does not duplicate, Porphyry. His title is *On the Pythagorean Life*, and his book was the introduction of a ten-volume sequence on Pythagorean philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

### (i)

The Pythagorean life, Iamblichus tells us, is organised so as to follow God (VP 86, 137). Pythagorean lifestyle is a discipline for body and soul. Pythagoras himself, as Iamblichus presents him, is proof that the gods are concerned for human life: they send his godlike soul to be embodied so that he may enlighten humanity. Earnest commitment to the philosophic life, as manifested by Pythagoras and his followers, can make human souls worthy of being raised to the level of the divine. The

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<sup>1</sup> O’Meara chs.1-2 discusses Pythagoreans of the C2-3 AD and I.’s work *On Pythagoreanism* (see n.9 below). For I.’s use of Porphyry, see n.11 below.

Hellenic religious tradition, which Pythagoras assimilates and develops, offers divinely inspired teaching, profound religious experience, personal holiness and communal love. Iamblichus does not say explicitly that in all these respects Graeco-Roman religion can meet the Christian challenge, but the pagan-Christian debate of the third and fourth centuries is the necessary background to his book.

Throughout Iamblichus's lifetime Christianity was making converts, even in the philosophical schools and among his own friends. His biography is not entirely secure, but there is no serious reason to doubt the main outlines.<sup>2</sup> Born in Syria in the mid-third century AD, of a landowning family, he was educated probably at the Syrian capital, Antioch, and at Alexandria. Both cities were centres of Christian theology as well as Graeco-Roman philosophy. Anatolius, one of Iamblichus's teachers, probably became bishop of Laodicea: his work, and perhaps Iamblichus's too, was known to Eusebius of Caesarea (in Palestine) who was engaged in the presentation of Christian doctrines and refutation of pagan claims. Iamblichus also worked, in Rome or Sicily, with another Syrian: Porphyry, the pupil of Plotinus. Porphyry was more actively involved in the resistance to Christianity. His book *Against the Christians*, written in the late third or early fourth century, was later banned (unsuccessfully) by the emperor Constantine.

Iamblichus had returned to teach in Syria probably before the outbreak of what Christians knew as the Great Persecution, ordered by the emperor Diocletian in 303 and pursued with great

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<sup>2</sup> For what follows see PLRE 1.450-1, based on J. Bidez, "Le philosophe Jamblique et son école", REG 32(1919) 29-40; modified by Alan Cameron, "The date of I.'s birth", *Hermes* 96(1968)374-6, and by T. D. Barnes, "A correspondent of I.", GRBS 19 (1978) 99-106. J. Vanderspoel, "I. at Daphne", GRBS 29 (1988) 83-6, offers suggestions on the place where I. taught. On Anatolius, see O'Meara 23, and T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (1981) 168; on Porphyry, T. D. Barnes, "Porphyry against the Christians: date and attribution of the fragments", JTS ns24 (1973) 424-42, and A. Meredith in ANRW II.23.2 1119-49, esp.1125-37. See further Fowden, esp.40-1.



bitterness, especially in the Middle East, for the next decade. He was in Syria in 313, when Constantine became ruler of the western empire and declared his allegiance to Christianity, and may not have lived to see Constantine conquer the eastern empire in 324, and summon the Council of Nicaea. His favourite pupil Sopater waited for him to die before openly joining Constantine's court: Sopater was there by 326/7.

The Christian challenge, officially sanctioned by Constantine, forced a new presentation of Graeco-Roman religious thinking. So far as we know, Iamblichus met the challenge not by seeking to refute Christianity but by reaffirming his own tradition. But after his death he became the theologian of a conscious pagan revival under Constantine's nephew Julian, known to Christians as the Apostate.<sup>3</sup> Julian never knew Iamblichus: born in 322, and a secret convert to paganism, he discovered Iamblichus's work perhaps at the university of Athens, and admired it immensely, going so far as to rank Iamblichus with Plato as a philosophical theologian (Julian, *or.* 4.146a). Even in the fourth century many people would have disagreed, and in the twentieth century Julian's assessment has been dismissed as the enthusiasm of one crank for another — just like that of Iamblichus for Pythagoras. But both enthusiasms deserve attention.

It is easy to see why people have thought poorly of Iamblichus. He is a notoriously unclear writer. His respectful biographer Eunapius, only three generations of teachers away, remarks on what he made of a much more straightforward subject than Pythagoras, the life of his brilliant friend Alypius. "The text was obscured by its style: it was overshadowed by a thick cloud, and not because the facts were unclear, for he had a long account by Alypius for information. Moreover he made no mention of philosophical works." (Eunapius 460.) Many scholars working on the *Life of Pythagoras* have read that with feeling. Moreover Iamblichus practised theurgy, the ritual invocation of

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<sup>3</sup> JH esp. 181-9.

divine presences, which many people from Plotinus on saw as dangerously close to magic. So Iamblichus was typecast as an exponent of the Higher Nonsense, clouding Hellenic clarity with Syrian religiosity. It is only in the last twenty years that work on later Platonism and Iamblichus's place in it, and on theurgy and Graeco-Roman religious thinking generally, has made Julian's enthusiasm believable.<sup>4</sup>

Julian became sole emperor in 361, and appears to have made a shrewd assessment of the problems facing a pagan revival after nearly fifty years of state-subsidised Christianity. Graeco-Roman paganism had an ancient tradition, drawing on the glamorous wisdom of the eastern cultures. Its local civic cults united the simple faithful, and its mysteries provided for other religious aspirations. It could cite divinely inspired texts: Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, the Orphic Hymns and the "Chaldaean oracles". But there was nothing comparable to Christian ethical and theological instruction, offered to all comers at weekly meetings: ethics and theology were for the elite who could afford to spend time with a philosopher. They were not linked with the civic cults, even though the gods were believed to be angered by failure to maintain moral standards. The emperor Maximin Daia, during the Great Persecution, had decided that what paganism lacked was a visible, integrated, spiritually authoritative priesthood. Julian, in his brief reign (361-3), went further, proposing basic religious teaching and a budget for

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<sup>4</sup> There is a classic denunciation of I. in J. Geffcken, *The Last Days of Graeco-Roman paganism* (ET 1978) 126-36. The gradual rise in I.'s reputation may be seen in CH (Lloyd, 1967), Larsen (1972), Wallis (1972), Dillon (1973) and Gersh (1978). For the revaluation of theurgy, contrast E.R.Dodds, "Theurgy and its relation to Neoplatonism", *JRS* 37(1947) 55-69, with Gregory Shaw, "Theurgy: rituals of unification in the Neoplatonism of I.", *Traditio* 41(1985)1-28; and see A. H. Armstrong, "I. and Egypt", *Les études philosophiques* 2-3 (1987)179-88. See also on 138 below.

charitable activities to make the pagan priesthoods an exact parallel to the Christian clergy. As emperor, he could supply the budget: it was the writings of Iamblichus which were to train the priests.<sup>5</sup>

(ii)

What, then, would the priests learn from Iamblichus? The aim of all the Platonist philosophers was that of Plato and Aristotle: the union of the philosopher's mind with the mind of God. Platonists held that reality is not the changing world which we see and touch, but the absolute values and unchanging being we discover by the exercise of reason. This reality is not itself God, who is beyond all our categories of thought, but God gives it being by thinking it. Human reason, the power to make sense of the world and to understand what reality is, is the aspect of human beings which is closest to the divine. (It would be misleading to make a distinction here between "mind" and "soul".) The more we engage in the activity of reason, the more we love and desire wisdom, the closer we are to God. Conversely, the more we involve ourselves in this transient material world, the further we are from God. The philosopher thus becomes a religious leader, not just an expert in argument.

We must, then, train ourselves to ignore disproportionate and irrelevant desires, and to meet only the genuine needs of our bodies and our communities. This is *askesis*, the Greek word for "training". Christian asceticism of the third and fourth centuries tended to move from salutary self-discipline to extremes of self-torment which only increased preoccupation with the body; philosophical asceticism aimed to regulate diet, sleep and lifestyle generally so as to free the mind for the hard intellectual work which prepares it to contemplate reality. Both the work and

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<sup>5</sup> Chaldaean oracles: see on 151 below. Pagan clergy: R.M. Grant, "The religion of Maximin Daia", in *Christianity, Judaism and other Graeco-Roman cults*, ed. J. Neusner (1975), vol. 4.143-66; Julian, letter 84, ed. J. Bidez (1924) — with the caution that Gregory of Nazianzus (Or. 4.111) and Sozomen (EH 5.16) may well exaggerate Julian's wish to emulate the Christian clergy.

the contemplation are called *theoria*, a word which has no single equivalent in English (particularly not "theory" in its modern sense of a hypothesis which awaits disproof).<sup>6</sup>

Iamblichus held (e.g. *On the Mysteries* 5.26) that the gods help us on our way: they respond to prayer and make supernatural guidance available to those who practise theurgy. This was a technique of ritual invocation, which the followers of Iamblichus held to be divinely inspired. The name "theurgy" was taken to mean "divine works" (in Greek, *theia erga* or *theon erga*). Iamblichus taught that the beings who appeared were not the gods themselves, but *daimones*, lesser spirits who give expression to that which, in the gods, is ineffable. The gods, being many, are themselves lesser than the One God, though immeasurably superior to mortals. *Daimones*, and below them heroes, bridge the gulf between divine and human.

Iamblichus disagreed with those who held that human souls are of the same nature as divine souls. He held that there are different classes of souls, and that human souls are not only by nature the lowest class, but are also contaminated by their mortal bodies. Theurgy, with the loving concern of the gods, purifies the soul from this contamination, and liberates it from the bonds of fate which control the material world. Iamblichus expounded theurgy in his commentary (now lost) on the Chaldaean Oracles, and in *On the Mysteries*, in which he responds to Porphyry's challenge that theurgy attempts to manipulate the gods, and that it abandons reason for superstition and dogmatism. He does not explicitly discuss it in *On the Pythagorean Life* (but see on 138): it was not a suitable teaching for an introductory text. Instead, he insists on the need for physical, moral and spiritual purification, for hard intellectual work in a range of disciplines based on mathematics, and for faith in the real theological content of traditional cults, divination, and supernatural happenings. Pythagoras both

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<sup>6</sup> See 58-9 (and note) and 159-60 on Platonism; 68-70 and note for the ascetic life. I.'s own development of Platonism is discussed in CH (Lloyd), Wallis, Dillon and O'Meara. *Theoria*: Dorothy Emmet, "Theoria and the way of life" JTS ns17 (1966) 38-52.

demonstrates the gods' concern to help us and exemplifies the way a human being should live and study.<sup>7</sup>

(iii)

So, without claiming that Iamblichus wrote *On the Pythagorean Life* as a primer for pagan clergy, we can read it as an example of the moral and spiritual training which Julian wanted priests to have. The philosopher Olympiodorus (*On Plato's Phaedo*, 123.3 Norvin) said Iamblichus was one of those whose chief concern was *hieratike*, the priestly task of mediating between gods and humans, rather than philosophy. Iamblichus would not have accepted this distinction, any more than the distinction between philosophy and theology: he wrote to train students of philosophy, who would become able to understand and transmit divine wisdom. When they had read the life of Pythagoras, and become convinced that Pythagoras was a divine soul sent to reveal the truth and teach human beings how to live, they were to continue with the *Protrepticus*, "Exhortation to Philosophy", which offers Pythagorean sayings and philosophers side by side with extracts from Plato and Aristotle. Thus encouraged, they advanced to a series of highly technical works on aspects of Pythagorean mathematics: that is, mathematics understood as the study of the structure of reality. These studies prepared them for Iamblichus's commentaries on selected texts of Plato and Aristotle, and on the Chaldaean Oracles, in which he expounded human understanding of God.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Daimones: On the Mysteries* 1.5.16-17. Souls: Steel part I, Finamore ch.2. Fate (*heimarmene*): see on 219.

<sup>8</sup> See the Bibliography for the *Protrepticus*. Two other Pythagorean works of I. survive: *On General Mathematical Science* (ed. N.Festa, Teubner 1891 repr.1975) and *The "Arithmetical Introduction" of Nicomachos* (ed.H.Pistelli, Teubner 1894 repr.1975). The titles of five others are in the contents-list of the manuscript (Florence, Laurentian Library 86.3, known as F) from which our copies of the extant texts derive. These titles are: *Arithmetic in Physics*, *Arithmetic in Ethics*, *Arithmetic in Theology*, *Pythagorean Geometry* and *Pythagorean Music*. A book on Pythagorean Astronomy, promised at the end of the book on Nicomachos, would bring the total to ten, the Pythagorean perfect number. O'Meara part I, esp.91-101, discusses the Pythagorean books overall and their relation to I.'s commentaries on Plato and Aristotle, which are discussed in detail by Larsen; fragments of the Plato commentaries are collected by Dillon.

We do not know how soon in his working life Iamblichus decided that Pythagoras was the ideal philosopher, nor to what extent he and his students followed the Pythagorean lifestyle he describes. It is unlikely that they observed a five-year silence for novices, or held their property in common: these features of Pythagorean communities are probably inspirational, just as the "primitive communism" of the earliest Christian church in Jerusalem was used to inspire charitable giving by property owners. Iamblichus himself, as described in late antique tradition, has much in common with his own Pythagoras. He too was known as "the divine"; he performed fewer miracles than Pythagoras, but his students were prepared to believe that when praying in solitude (but observed by slaves) he levitated and became golden in colour. He once, reluctantly, caused some spirits to appear, and he was aware of the recent presence of death. He also taught secret "truer doctrines", which his followers were reluctant to reveal to a Eunapius aged all of twenty. (Eunapius 458-9, 461.) But there were other late antique philosophers who were "holy men" in the same way, and Iamblichus is distinctively Pythagorean in his approach to mathematics rather than in his supernatural gifts.<sup>9</sup>

*On the Pythagorean Life* is chiefly concerned with lifestyle and human relationships, and Iamblichus's students could have practised most of what he preached. Here again, one did not have to be Pythagorean to approve of a disciplined and temperate way of life, mostly vegetarian and teetotal; avoidance of careless speech; training of memory; awareness of bonds with fellow-creatures and with gods, and willingness to accept the obligations these impose. Iamblichus's treatment of relationships between the sexes does deserve special notice. Most ancient philosophy deals with women's lives as an afterthought, briefly

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<sup>9</sup> Christian "communism" compared with Pythagorean: Luke T.Johnson, *Sharing Possessions* (1986). For the philosopher as "holy man" see Fowden, esp.36, and Cox ch.2; for I.'s main concerns in Pythagoreanism, O'Meara 210-5.

noting that educated women can manifest virtue in their domestic setting, and registering disagreement with Plato's radical proposal (always known as "wives and children in common") for extracting the most able women from domestic life. This is, in part, because so few women were serious students of philosophy, and those mostly wives or daughters (or, in the school of Epicurus, mistresses) of male philosophers. Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus all knew women of this kind, but it was very rare for a woman to make an acknowledged contribution to philosophy.

Pythagoreanism not only remembered the names of more women than other schools did (though still only seventeen women as against two hundred and eighteen men, in the list with which Iamblichus ends): some of them were credited with philosophical treatises of which fragments survive. One, ascribed to Theano, deals with the metaphysical status of number, another, ascribed to Aesara, with the organisation of human nature. The others, ascribed to Theano, Periktione, Phintys and Myia, are concerned with domestic virtue. We need not dismiss these works as attempts, by men or collusive women, to keep women in their place. They set out to show that traditional female concern for a well-run household, healthy upbringing of children, tactful handling of husbands, personal modesty and frugality, are important manifestations of the harmony of the cosmos.<sup>10</sup>

Pythagoras's speech to the women of Kroton, as Iamblichus presents it (VP 54-7), is unusually aware of what is morally significant in women's daily lives. Pythagoras thinks they will see the importance of making and taking offerings to the gods with one's own hands, and of refusing to be preoccupied with appearance and expensive clothes: he actually praises them for the natural justice displayed in their informal, unwitnessed loans of clothes and jewels, the only possessions indisputably

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<sup>10</sup> Texts ascribed to Pythagorean women are translated and discussed in *A History of Women Philosophers* ed. Mary Ellen Waithe, vol.1 (1987) chs.1-4.

theirs. Moreover, he emphasises — at the women's request — the obligation of husbands to be faithful to their wives (VP 132). It is not unusual for ancient philosophers to point out that men demand chastity of (some) women, but should — being male — be able to control sexual desire more easily than women can. It is unusual to present marriage as a religious commitment, the wife being like a suppliant at her husband's hearth, and to argue that the husband's neglect of his wife may drive her into adultery (VP 48)

## (iv)

Students of women in antiquity would very much like to know when these speeches were composed, and how far back we can trace a set of attitudes which have been assigned on the one hand to the fourth century BC or earlier, and on the other to Christian influence in the second or third century AD. This is one instance of a general problem about Iamblichus and Pythagorean tradition.

All information about philosophers before Plato depends on reports by later philosophers, who of course have their own concerns. For Pythagoras, the question is complicated precisely because there was a "Pythagorean Life", a lifestyle with major social and political implications, which was authorised by what "ipse dixit", "the Master said". What had the Master said?

Most scholars in the ancient world agreed that Pythagoras had left no writings (see on VP 90), that his followers had maintained an esoteric oral tradition, and that the tradition had faded out in the fourth century BC when the Pythagoreans had left South Italy. But Iamblichus, like Porphyry a little before him and Diogenes Laertius earlier in the third century AD, could have drawn on a very wide range of texts and interpretations. The question is whether he did.

A scatter of comment survives even from the fifth century BC, but the main lines of debate were established in the fourth century BC. Plato's pupils (Aristotle, Speusippos, Xenokrates) discussed what exactly Pythagoras taught about the relationship of number to God and to the material world, and what, if



anything, Plato owed him. In the next generation (Aristoxenos, Dikaiarchos, Herakleides of Pontus) the debate was more political: was Pythagoras an activist or a contemplative, did he train oligarchs to despise the people, was he a fraud? Some saw him as an archaic religious genius to be followed in simple faith, others as a rigorous modern intellectual who insisted on the higher mathematics. Then there was the question of Pythagorean influence on the politics of South Italy, which interested the Sicilian historian Timaeus.

None of this fourth-century material survives intact, though it can sometimes be traced in later writing. The tradition was complicated, from the third to the first centuries BC, by "pseudepigrapha", works ascribed to Pythagoras himself or to famous followers, all presenting the Pythagoreanism their authors wanted to see. Then, in the first and second centuries AD, attempts were made to harmonise Pythagoras and Plato in what are now called Neopythagorean writings. Iamblichus cites two of these authors, both of the second century AD: the mathematician Nicomachos of Gerasa (Jerash), and the wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana, who claimed to rival the powers of Pythagoras. It is a moot point whether he read anybody else, or whether he got most of his material (including learned references to earlier authors) from Porphyry.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The tradition about P. is extensively discussed by de Vogel, who thinks authentic early tradition survived; Philip, who is sceptical; and Burkert LS, who remarks (p.109) that every item of information about P. is contradicted somewhere in the tradition. The basic articles on sources are by E.Rohde, RhM 26 (1871) 554-76 and 27 (1872) 23-61: he argues that I. derived his material from Nicomachos and Apollonius. This is challenged by Philip in TAPA 90 (1959) 185-94, with bibliography of earlier discussion, on the grounds that Nicomachos is not known to have written a life of P., and that I.'s basic structure, content and purpose are very close to Porphyry's (the overall effect is different because I. adds ch.26, on music, from Nicomachos, and his own compilation of virtues 134-247). For Nicomachos see O'Meara 14-23, for Apollonius E.Bowie in ANRW II.16.2 1652-99, esp.1671-2. Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* is ed. and tr. by E. des Places (see Bibliography), and there is an English version in *Gods and Heroes: spiritual biographies in antiquity* ed.M.Hadas and M.Smith (1965). "Neopythagorean" writing is discussed by Dillon MP ch. 7.

Source-criticism, the painstaking attempt to distinguish sources and different levels of the tradition, has tried to tell us what Iamblichus does not. The results are disputed. Iamblichus believed, like other philosophers of late antiquity, that the great philosophers teach the same fundamental truths, and that apparent disagreements can be reconciled.<sup>12</sup> This is not the approach of a critical historian, and such people wish that it had not been Iamblichus who wrote what has proved to be the most extensive surviving account of Pythagoreanism. He does not, as a rule, name sources; he does not distinguish his own interpretations from earlier tradition; he is unclear and sometimes contradictory; he repeats material, sometimes for paragraphs at a time. Some scholars have been exasperated enough to conclude that Iamblichus was hopelessly muddle-headed, or that he died leaving a mass of notes which someone else edited badly. These are unnecessarily severe judgements: the defects of the *Life* (from our point of view) are not peculiar to Iamblichus. It is only the repetitions which are, I think, unparalleled, and they are partly to be explained by the structure Iamblichus uses. His account of Pythagoras's life includes moral comment, as is usual in ancient biography, but he then groups together material to demonstrate specific virtues. Repetitions are inevitable, and Iamblichus may have accepted them as an aid to memory — or even welcomed them as a proof that all virtues are one.<sup>13</sup>

## (v)

The standard text of the *Life* is by L. Deubner, B. G. Teubner Verlag Stuttgart 1937 (revised by U. Klein, 1975). It is followed here, with the publisher's permission, with a few divergences which I have noted when, in my judgement, the question is important to TTH readers. Deubner's edition is learned, but difficult to use, as he has no space to explain his readings and references.<sup>14</sup> Some of the

<sup>12</sup> H. J. Blumenthal, *Phronesis* 21(1976)72-9.

<sup>13</sup> I owe the suggestion on the unity of the virtues to Anne Sheppard.

<sup>14</sup> Deubner discusses his readings in the *Sitzungsberichte der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, phil.-hist. klasse*, Berlin 1935, 612-90 and 824-7, but his concerns are mainly philological.

literature on Iamblichus refers to pages and lines in the Deubner-Klein text; some uses chapter-numbers or, more recently, paragraph numbers. I have included in the text both chapter and paragraph numbers, as well as the chapter headings which Deubner prints separately. My own notes refer throughout to paragraph numbers.

This translation is offered because none known to me gave readers enough help in understanding what Iamblichus is talking about, and it is a long job to find out. The classic English version, by Thomas Taylor "the Platonist" (1818), has some notes; the German version by M.Albrecht (1963) has brief and sensible notes; the "Krotoniate speeches" (VP 47-57) are translated, with detailed notes, by de Vogel; I found all these helpful.<sup>15</sup> But the greatest help was given by Dr.Anne Sheppard, of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, who found time to read and comment on both text and notes. I am most grateful to her.

Dr.Andrew Barker, of Warwick University, saved me from several errors on musicology, and kindly allowed me to see his own draft of ch.26, which will appear in volume II of his *Greek Musical Writings*. Dr. D.R.Dicks, and Professor H.A.Hine of St.Andrews, helped with the astronomy in 31. Professor D.J.O'Meara, of Fribourg, sent me some important material from his *Pythagoras Revived* before its publication in 1989. My colleagues in Liverpool, especially Henry Blumenthal and Noreen Fox, have been pressed into service on questions ranging from metaphysics to lice (see on 184; I owe the reference to Professor Peter Wiseman of Exeter). My teaching in Manchester helped to set Iamblichus in his theological context. Margaret Gibson and Christa Mee have shown their usual benevolent efficiency. The camera ready copy was produced by *Liverpool Classical Monthly*. The publication was made possible by a generous grant from the Wolfson Foundation.

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor's translation was reprinted, in a limited edition, by J.M.Watkins (London 1965). A revision of his version, by K.S.Guthrie, is included in *The Pythagorean Sourcebook*, ed.David R.Fideler (1987): this has to be used with caution for any scholarly purpose. I have not seen the Italian version by L.Montoneri (1973) noted in O'Meara 242.



## IAMBLICHUS: ON THE PYTHAGOREAN LIFE

1 Preface. The philosophy of Pythagoras. Preliminary invocation of the gods. The usefulness and difficulty of the undertaking.

(1) All right-minded people, embarking on any study of philosophy, invoke a god. This is especially fitting for the philosophy which takes its name from the divine Pythagoras (a title well deserved), since it was originally handed down from the gods and can be understood only with the gods' help. Moreover, its beauty and grandeur surpass the human capacity to grasp it all at once: only by approaching quietly, little by little, under the guidance of a benevolent god, can one appropriate a little. (2) Let us, then, for all these reasons, invoke the gods to guide us, entrust ourselves and our discussion to them, and follow where they lead. The school has long been neglected, hidden from view by unfamiliar doctrines and secret symbols, obscured by misleading forgeries, impeded by many other such difficulties — let us disregard all that. Sufficient for us is the will of the gods, which makes it possible to tackle problems even more insoluble than these. And after the gods we shall take as our guide the founder and father of the divine philosophy, first saying a little about his ancestry and country.

2 Pythagoras' family, country, upbringing and education; his travels abroad, return home and subsequent departure for Italy; a general account of life as he led it.

(3) Ankaïos, founder of Same in Kephallenia, is said to have

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1-2 I.'s opening recalls Plato's *Timaeus*, a fundamental text for Platonist philosophers: *Timaeus*, traditionally a "Pythagorean visitor", invokes the god (27c) before beginning his cosmological discourse. The combination of careful study and divine guidance, exemplified in the *Life* (and stated at 31) is characteristic of I. (see Introduction).

2 Pythagoreanism was not wholly neglected in the early centuries AD: see O'Meara ch.1 (with bibliography). But there is no evidence for Pythagorean brotherhoods after the C4 BC diaspora (see 252-3, and 29-30n). Symbols: 82-6 and note, 103-5. Forgeries: known as pseudepigrapha, works assigned to known Pythagoreans (cf.198) from the C3 BC on; fragments are collected by Thesleff 1965, and discussed by Thesleff and Burkert in *Entretiens Hardt* 18 (1971), Pseudepigrapha I, ed. K. von Fritz.

been a descendant of Zeus (whether it was some outstanding quality or greatness of soul which brought him this reputation) surpassing the other Kephallenians in intellect and thought. The Delphic oracle told him to assemble a colony from Kephallenia, Arcadia and Thessaly, with additional members from Athens, Epidaurus and Chalcis. He was to lead all these to settle in an island known, from the excellence of its soil, as Darkleaf, and was to call the city Samos, after Same in Kephallenia.

(4) The oracle went like this:

Ankaios, colonise the sea-washed isle

Called Samos, not Samé: its name is Leafy.

Samian cults and sacrifices, transferred from the places from which most of the men came, demonstrate that the colonies came from the places I have named; and so do the ties of kinship and alliance made by the Samians. They say that Mnesarchos and Pythais, the parents of Pythagoras, were of the house and family of Ankaios the colonist. (5) Such is the high birth ascribed to Pythagoras by his fellow-citizens; but one of the Samian poets says he was the son of Apollo:

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3-4 Samian foundation-legends: Graham Shipley, *A History of Samos 800-300 BC* (1987). Kephallenia is one of the Ionian Islands, off the coast of NW Greece.

5-8 Versions of P's human ancestry are discussed by Philip 185-7. Herakleides of Pontus, a student of Aristotle, said that P. had been Aethalides, son of the god Hermes who conducts mortals to the afterlife, and who had given him the gift of retaining memory through death. Hermes was also the god of words, and thus of persuasive speakers and of priests (cf. I. *On the Mysteries* 1.1, and 12n below). But Apollo, patron of the Muses (45, 170, 264) and communicator to mortals of the will of Zeus, is the inspiration of poets and philosophers, and is especially suitable for P. His cult-title Pythios (found at Kroton, 50 and 261) honours him as god of the Delphic oracle, where his priestess the Pythia spoke truth in gnomic form (105, 161); the name Pythagoras can, by ancient etymological methods, mean "spoken by the Pythia" or "speaking like the Pythia" (DL 8.21). Apollo was also musician, purifier and healer (cf. 64, 68, 208) and was identified with Helios, the Sun, focus of much late antique piety (JH 148-53). I's philosophy does not allow a god to beget a human being: the divine is separate from the material world. But it does allow for a pure soul which descends to the material world, without being contaminated or losing its connection with the divine (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 248c, and O'Meara 37-9), to help with the "preservation, purification and perfection" of this world. Such a soul has an appropriate physical home (e.g. 5, 9-10, 15-16 for beauty, serenity and effortless ease, and 71 for P's assessment of students); the resultant "holy man" has exceptional awareness both of events still hidden from others (36, 142) and of the

Pythagoras, borne to Zeus-beloved Apollo  
By Pythais, the fairest of the Samians.

I must explain how this story came to prevail. Mnesarchos the Samian was in Delphi on a business trip, with his wife, who was already pregnant but did not know it. He consulted the Pythia about his voyage to Syria. The oracle replied that his voyage would be most satisfying and profitable, and that his wife was already pregnant and would give birth to a child surpassing all others in beauty and wisdom, who would be of the greatest benefit to the human race in all aspects of life. (6) Mnesarchos reckoned that the god would not have told him, unasked, about a child, unless there was indeed to be some exceptional and god-given superiority in him. So he promptly changed his wife's name from Parthenis to Pythais, because of the birth and the prophetess. (7) When she gave birth, at Sidon in Phoenicia, he called his son Pythagoras, because the child had been foretold by the Pythia. So we must reject the theory of Epimenides, Eudoxos and Xenokrates that Apollo had intercourse at that time with Parthenis, made her pregnant (which she was not before) and told her of it through the prophetess. (8) But no-one who takes account of this birth, and of the range of Pythagoras' wisdom, could doubt that the soul of Pythagoras was sent to humankind from Apollo's retinue, and was Apollo's companion or still more intimately linked with him. So much, then, for the birth of Pythagoras.

(9) Mnesarchos returned from Syria to Samos with great profits

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workings of the universe (31,66), and inspires awe (Fowden 33-8). I's students saw him as one such. But I. does not deny that P. was a theophany of Apollo (30, 91-2, 134-6, 140-3): Cox ch.2 argues for deliberate ambiguity about the divine on earth. Of those who took the traditional line that P. was literally "son of Apollo", Epimenides (135-6, 222; Vatai 35-6) was a C6 BC sage; Eudoxos a brilliant C4 mathematician, pupil of Archytas (for whom see 127n); Xenokrates a successor of Plato as head of the Academy, who visited Sicily and wrote on P. (DL 4.13, Dillon MP 22-39).

9 DL 8.1 says Mnesarchos was a gem-engraver: see Nancy Demand, *Phronesis* 18(1973)91-6. The travels and studies are designed to let P. absorb all forms of traditional wisdom (158-9) and need not be historical. Kreophylos links him to the "sons of Homer" who were authorities on the recitation of Homer's poetry. For Pythagorean exegesis of Homer, who was also among the sacred texts of late antique philosophy, see Lamberton esp.31-43. Pherekydes (184, 252) was a C6 BC sage, traditionally the first prose-writer on nature and the gods, who shares some prediction-stories with P. (KRS 50-71, Philip 188-9, West chs.1-2).

and extensive resources. He built a temple to Apollo with a dedication to Apollo Pythios, and gave his son a many-sided education in the most important subjects. He took him to Kreophylos, to Pherekydes of Syros and to almost all those outstanding in religious matters, undertaking to have him thoroughly and adequately taught, so far as was possible, about what concerns the gods. Pythagoras grew up surpassing in beauty all persons known to history, and in good fortune most worthy of a god. (10) After his father's death he continued to grow in earnestness and self-control, and while still a very young man, full of courtesy and modesty, he was well thought of even by the eldest citizens. Everyone turned to look on seeing him or hearing his voice, and anyone he looked at was struck with admiration, so it was quite understandable that most people were convinced he was the son of a god. Fortified by these beliefs about him, by his education from infancy and by his godlike appearance, he made still greater efforts to show himself worthy of his privileges. He regulated his life by worship, study and a well-chosen regime: his soul was in balance and his body controlled, his speech and action showed an inimitable serenity and calm; no anger, mockery, envy, aggression or any other perturbation or rash impulse, took hold of him. It was as if a benevolent spirit had come to stay in Samos.

(11) Before he was quite adult his fame had reached the sages Thales at Miletos and Bias at Priene, and the

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11 Thales (KRS II) and Anaximander (ib.III) are traditionally the earliest presocratic philosophers, working in the first half of the 6th BC. Bias counts rather as a sage (44, 83; A.R.Burn, *The Lyric Age Of Greece* (1960) 207-9). The "long-haired lad" cf.30: young men of Ionian Greek descent marked their adulthood (aged 16-18) by cutting their long hair as an offering to Apollo; but the story is probably transferred from P.'s namesake the boxer (DL 8.47-8; see 21-5n) and does not prove that P. was c.18 in the mid 530s, when Polykrates established control. See Shipley (o.c. 3-4n) ch.4 for the chronology of Polykrates, and on the suggestion that an earlier Polykrates ruled c.570-40 BC. There is in fact no secure chronology of P.'s life. The C2 BC chronographer Apollodorus equated his acme or "peak" (traditionally, age 40) with the year at which Polykrates's tyranny was at its height, 532 BC. This may be right, and may come from a good source, Aristoxenos (see 233n). Even if it is not, we have no better guess than c.530 for P.'s eventual departure for Italy (see 33n), when on I.'s internal chronology (19) he was 56!



neighbouring cities too. "The long-haired lad in Samos" became a catch-phrase, as people in many cities talked about the young man, sang his praises, and treated him like a god. When he was about eighteen the tyranny of Polykrates was beginning to gather strength. He foresaw where it would lead, and how much it would hinder his purpose and the love of learning which mattered to him above all. So he left by night, undetected, with one Hermodamas surnamed "the Kreophylian" and said to descend from the Kreophylos who was Homer's host and became his friend and teacher in everything. With him, then, Pythagoras travelled to see Pherekydes, Anaximander the natural philosopher, and Thales at Miletos. (12) He spent time with each in turn, talking with them to such effect that they all took him to their hearts, astonished at his natural ability, and shared their thoughts with him. Thales in particular received him with joy. He was amazed at the difference between Pythagoras and other young men, which was even greater than the report which had gone before him. He shared with Pythagoras such learning as he could, then, blaming his old age and weakness, urged him to sail to Egypt and consult especially the priests at Memphis and Diospolis. He himself, he said, had been furnished by them with what gave him his popular reputation for wisdom. But he had not been blessed with such advantages of natural endowment and training as he could see in Pythagoras, so from all this he foretold that if Pythagoras associated with the priests he had indicated, he would become the most godlike of mortals, surpassing all others in wisdom.

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12 Egypt: Diospolis ("City of Zeus", Egyptian Thebes) housed the sanctuary of Zeus Ammon. Greek indebtedness to Egyptian religious tradition, vividly attested in Herodotus II (and Plato, *Timaeus* 22a and 24bc), was renewed in late antiquity (see Fowden). I.'s dispute with Porphyry about theurgy, *On The Mysteries (Of Egypt)* is in the persona of the Egyptian priest Abammon, speaking for the subordinate to whom Porphyry addressed his *Letter To Anebo*; and a much-revered collection of religious writings from Egypt was ascribed to the Egyptian god Thoth, hellenised as Hermes Trismegistus - hence the Hermetic Corpus. See A-J Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 vols 1944-54; Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: a historical approach to the late pagan mind* (1987).

3 Pythagoras' voyage to Phoenicia and studies there; his subsequent visit to Egypt.

(13) Thales had helped him in many ways, especially in making good use of time. For this reason he had renounced wine, meat, and (even earlier) large meals, and had adjusted to light and digestible food. So he needed little sleep, and achieved alertness, clarity of soul, and perfect and unshakable health of body. Then he sailed on to Sidon, aware that it was his birthplace, and correctly supposing that crossing to Egypt would be easier from there. (14) In Sidon he met the descendants of Mochos the natural philosopher and prophet, and the other Phoenician hierophants, and was initiated into all the rites peculiar to Byblos, Tyre and other districts of Syria. He did not, as one might unthinkingly suppose, undergo this experience from superstition, but far more from a passionate desire for knowledge, and as a precaution lest something worth learning should elude him by being kept secret in the mysteries or rituals of the gods. Besides, he had learnt that the Syrian rites were offshoots of those of Egypt, and hoped to share, in Egypt, in mysteries of a purer form, more beautiful and more divine. Awestruck, as his teacher Thales had promised, he crossed without delay to Egypt, conveyed by Egyptian seamen who had made a timely landing on the shore below Mount Carmel in Phoenicia, where Pythagoras had been spending most of his time alone in the sanctuary. They were glad to take him on board, hoping to exploit his youthful beauty and get a good price if they sold him. (15) But on the voyage he behaved with his habitual self-control and decorum, and they became better disposed to

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14 Syria: homeland of I., who was born at Chalcis and returned to teach probably at Apamea (see Introduction note 2), and of Porphyry (originally Malchus of Tyre). Mochos (according to Strabo 16.757) lived before the Trojan war and originated the theory of atoms: Dillon MP 143 thinks the name may be a version of Moses. It is odd that I. does not include Jewish wisdom (see A.Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (1975) ch.4), unless he saw it as Babylonian or Chaldaean: Porphyry (*Life Of P.*11) has P. learn Hebrew dream-interpretation. Other sources take P. to Arabia and India (Philip 189-91).

him. They saw something superhuman in the lad's self-discipline, and remembered how they had seen him, just as they landed, coming down from the summit of Mount Carmel (which they knew to be the most sacred of the mountains, and forbidden to ordinary people), descending at leisure, without turning back, unimpeded by precipice or rock-face. He had stood by the boat, said only "Are you bound for Egypt?" and when they agreed had come on board and sat down where he would be least in the way of nautical tasks. (16) Throughout the voyage — three days and two nights — he had remained in the same position. He had not eaten or drunk or slept, unless he had dozed briefly, unobserved, where he sat, secure and undisturbed. Moreover, to their surprise, the journey had been straight, continuous and direct, as though some god were present. So, putting all this together, they concluded that there really was a divine spirit travelling with them from Syria to Egypt, and they completed the voyage with extreme reverence. Their language and behaviour to each other and to him was more decorous than usual, until they beached the boat on the shore of Egypt — a landing blessed by fortune and wholly untroubled by waves. (17) There he disembarked, and all of them respectfully lifted him out, passed him from one to another and seated him where the sand was entirely clean. They built an improvised altar before him, on which they scattered such fruit as they had, as a kind of first-fruits of the cargo. Then they set sail for their destination. His body was out of condition from his long fast, so he did not oppose the landing or the sailors' lifting and handling him; and when they left he did not long hold back from the fruits which lay before him. He ate what he needed to restore his strength, and reached the neighbouring villages safely, maintaining throughout his accustomed serenity.

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16 "Divine spirit": in Greek, *daimon theios* (cf.30). See Détienne, *Daimon*, for earlier Pythagorean usage; for later antiquity, Frederick E. Brenck S.J. in ANRW II.16.3 pp.2094-8. I. ranks *daimones* below gods (and archangels and angels) but above heroes and humans (*On The Mysteries* 1.5.16-17): see further Finamore ch.2.

4 His studies in Egypt, subsequent visit to Babylon and meeting with the magi; his return to Samos.

(18) From there he visited all the sanctuaries, making detailed investigations with the utmost zeal. The priests and prophets he met responded with admiration and affection, and he learned from them most diligently all that they had to teach. He neglected no doctrine valued in his time, no man renowned for understanding, no rite honoured in any region, no place where he expected to find some wonder. So he visited all the priests, profiting from each one's particular wisdom. (19) He spent twenty-two years in the sacred places of Egypt, studying astronomy and geometry, and being initiated — but not just on impulse or as the occasion offered — into all the rites of the gods, until he was captured by the expedition of Kambyzes and taken to Babylon. There he spent time with the Magi, to their mutual rejoicing, learning what was holy among them, acquiring perfected knowledge of the worship of the gods and reaching the heights of their mathematics and music and other disciplines. He spent twelve more years with them, and returned to Samos, aged by now about fifty-six.

5 His studies in Samos on his return, and remarkable skill in educating one who shared his name; his visits to the Greeks and the discipline he practised on Samos.

(20) Some of the elders recognised him, and admired him as much as ever: they thought him more beautiful, wiser, and more godlike. His country publicly requested him to benefit them all by sharing his ideas. He made no objection, and tried to set out his teaching in symbolic form, exactly in the way he had been

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18 "doctrine" translates *akousma*: see 82-6n.

19 Kambyzes's expedition was 525 BC. I.'s narrative brings P. into contact with many famous people (Thales, Epimenides, Polykrates, Empedokles amongst others) who cannot all fit into a possible lifetime. Babylonian astronomy and mathematics, including "Pythagoras' theorem", influenced Greek mathematics in the C5 BC - not necessarily via the Pythagoreans (Burkert LS IV.1, VI.1).

20 "symbolic": see 82-6n.

trained in Egypt, even though the Samians did not much care for this method and did not give him the appropriate attention. (21) Nobody joined him or showed any serious desire for the teachings he was making every effort to establish among the Greeks. He felt no contempt or scorn for Samos, since it was his country, but he wanted his countrymen at least to taste the beauty of his doctrines, if not by their own choice then by a well-devised plan. So he kept his eye on a gifted and well-coordinated ball-player at the gymnasium, one of those who were athletic and muscular but lacked financial resources, reckoning that this man would be easy to persuade by the offer of a generous subsidy without trouble to himself. He called the young man over after his bath, and promised to keep him supplied with funds to maintain his athletic training, if he would learn — in instalments, painlessly, consistently, so as not to be overburdened — some teachings which he himself had learnt from foreigners in his youth, but which were already escaping him through the forgetfulness of old age. (22) The young man accepted, and persevered in the hope of maintenance, and Pythagoras set out to instil in him arithmetic and geometry. He demonstrated every point on a drawing-board, and paid the young man three obols per figure (geometrical figure, that is) in return for his trouble. He did this for some considerable time, introducing him to study with great enthusiasm and excellent method, still paying three obols for each figure learnt. (23) But when the young man, led down the right path, had some grasp of excellence and of delight and progress in learning, and Pythagoras saw what was happening, that he would not of his own choice abandon his studies — indeed that nothing could keep him from them — he pretended that he was poor and could not afford the three obols. (24) The young man said “I can learn, and receive your teachings, without that”, and Pythagoras

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21-5 The gymnasium, hallmark of Hellenic culture, was an obvious place for philosophers to recruit students from the governing elite (37, 245). P. the athlete (DL 8.12-13, 47) won an Olympic victory in boxing (in 588 BC, another date which cannot fit) by using new techniques.

retorted "But I cannot afford the necessities of life even for myself, and when one has to work for one's daily needs and food it is quite wrong to be distracted by timewasting things like drawing-boards". The young man, reluctant to lose the thread of his studies, said "I will provide for you in future as you have done for me I will pay you back three obols per figure". (25) He was now so taken by Pythagoras' teaching that he was the only Samian to leave with him. His name was Pythagoras too, but his father was Eratokles. He wrote the books on massage, and on replacing the dried-fig diet for athletes with a meat diet — these are wrongly ascribed to Pythagoras son of Mnesarchos. About this time, it is said, Pythagoras aroused great admiration at Delos, where he had gone to visit the so-called "bloodless" altar of Apollo Genetor, and to worship him. From there he visited all the oracles, and stayed in Crete and Sparta because of their laws. After study and examination of all these, he returned home to investigate what he had as yet neglected. (26) First he built a lecture-room in the city, still called "Pythagoras' semicircle", where the Samians now discuss public affairs: they think it proper to make their investigation of what is right, just and expedient in the place founded by one who gave his attention to all these. (27) Outside the city he took over a cave for his own philosophical work, and there he spent most of the night, as well as the day, in the pursuit of useful learning, with the same idea as Minos son of Zeus. He was quite different from those who later made use of his teachings: they prided themselves on a little learning, but he perfected his knowledge of heavenly matters, using the whole of arithmetic and geometry in his demonstrations.

6 His reasons for moving to Italy and his sojourn there; a general view of Pythagoras' character and philosophy.

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25 Apollo Genetor (35) was offered only "fruits of the earth": for his cult, see DL 8.13, and Détiénne GA 46-7. P's respect for the laws of Crete and Sparta parallels that of Plato in the *Laws*.

27 Minos king of Crete retired every nine years to a cave, and emerged with laws which, he said, Zeus had given him (Valerius Maximus 1.2.ext.1).

(28) But he deserves yet more admiration for what he did next. His philosophy had already made great advances; all Greece admired him and all the best people, those most devoted to wisdom, came to Samos on his account, wanting to share in the education he gave. His fellow Samians dragged him into every embassy and made him share in all their civic duties. He realised that if he stayed in Samos, obedient to his country's laws, it would be hard for him to do philosophy; and all the earlier philosophers had continued their careers abroad. So, taking all this into account, and wishing to avoid political business (or, some say, objecting to the contempt for education shown by those who then lived on Samos), he left for Italy, resolved to take as his homeland a country fertile in people who were well-disposed to learning. (29) On his first visit, to the famous city of Kroton, he made many disciples [it is reported that he had there six hundred people who were not only inspired to study his philosophy, but actually became "coenobites" according to his instructions. (30) These were the students of philosophy: the majority were listeners, whom the Pythagoreans call "acousmatics" (hearers)]. In just one lecture, they say, the very first which Pythagoras gave to the assembled populace on landing alone in Italy, more than two thousand people were so powerfully attracted by his words that they never went home, but with their wives and children built a huge Auditorium, and

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29-30 I follow Deubner in thinking the passage in [ ] misplaced, though it can make sense (Minar p.29-30) if the 600 are one section of the 2000: see on 80. "Coenobites", Greek *koinobioi* is rare in non-Christian literature, and there may be conscious rivalry with Christian monasticism as it developed in the late C3 AD. For the parallels, especially with Athanasius, *Life Of Antony*, see A-J Festugière, EPG 443-61. Cox 52-4 thinks there is no deliberate parallel, but see her ch.6 for the *Life* in the context of pagan challenge to Christianity. Burkert SD points out that Pythagoreanism, as described by I., is the closest non-Christian parallel to the Christian churches, in terms of lifestyle, organisation and authority. Philip 138-46 suspects simple back-projection of Christian patterns; but J.S.Morrison, CQ ns 6(1956) 150-1 argues for an archaic Greek male brotherhood, as in the "messes" of Crete and Sparta. For Hyperborean Apollo, see on 91-3. Greater Greece see 166n. Spirits in the moon, Détiénne *Daimon* 140-67: the moon rules time and these spirits direct the material, "sublunary" world, which is bound by the laws of the universe (see 219n). For sublunary *daimones* in I., Dillon ANRW p.901.

founded what everyone calls "Greater Greece". They took their laws and ordinances from Pythagoras as if they were divine commands, and did nothing except by them, and they continued in harmony with the whole group of students. The people who lived nearby praised them and blessed their good fortune. They had their property in common, as Pythagoras had told them, and from then on they counted him among the gods, as a good and kindly spirit. Some called him Apollo Pythios, some Hyperborean Apollo, some Apollo Healer (Paian), some said he was one of the spirits who live in the moon; some said one, some another, of the Olympians, who had appeared in human form to the people of that time for the benefit and amendment of mortal life, and to grant mortal nature the saving spark of happiness and philosophy. No greater good has ever come, or ever will come, as a gift from the gods. So, even now, the saying "the longhair from Samos" means something worthy of great respect. (31) Aristotle, in his *The Philosophy of Pythagoras*, says that the Pythagoreans make a distinction as follows, guarding it among their most secret teachings: among rational beings there are gods, and humans, and beings like Pythagoras. This was a perfectly reasonable belief about him, since through him there came to be a true understanding, according with reality, of gods and heroes and spirits and the universe, the various movements of the spheres and stars, eclipses and eastward motion and anomalies, eccentrics and epicycles — everything in the universe, heaven and earth and the beings between, visible and invisible. This understanding in no way conflicted with what can be seen or can be grasped by the intellect. Rather, it established among the Greeks all the exact sciences and branches of knowledge, everything that gives the soul true vision and clears the mind

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31 Aristotle: fr 192 Ross (W.D. Ross, *Aristotle Fragmenta Selecta* 1955). See KRS VII esp. 228-32, Philip ch. 5-6, Barnes II. 76-81, for his account of Pythagoreanism. Astronomy: for Pythagorean astronomy see D.R. Dicks, *Early Greek Astronomy to Aristotle* (1970) ch. 4, and Burkert LS IV. Pythagoreans appear to have held that the earth, as well as the moon, sun, planets and "fixed stars", rotated around a central fire; their distances apart were in harmonic proportion, and their movement produced the "music of



blinded by other practices, so that they may see the real principles and causes of all there is. (32) The best form of civic life, community living, the principle "friends have all in common", worship of the gods and respect for the departed, lawgiving, education, control of speech, mercy towards living things, self-control, temperance, alertness of mind and likeness to god — in a word, all good things: all these, through him, were seen by lovers of learning to be desirable and worthy of effort. So, as I have just said, it was with good reason that they so greatly admired Pythagoras.

7 Characteristic examples of his actions in Italy and his public speeches.

(33) Next I must say how he went abroad and where first, and what he said to whom on what subjects: that will make it easy for us to understand his concerns at that period of his life. It is said that on arriving in Italy and Sicily he found that some cities had been made subject to others, some for years and some recently. These he filled with the spirit of freedom through his disciples in each, rescued and liberated them: Kroton, Sybaris,

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the spheres" (see on 64-7). Later astronomers, using this or another (geocentric or heliocentric) model, added refinements to explain the "anomalies", that is the observed movements of the heavens which do not fit the model. Thus "eccentrics" are movements not centred on the earth, and "epicycles" are circles the centre of which moves round the circumference of a much larger circle: both appear in writings of the C3 BC and have no known Pythagorean connection. "Eastward motion" translates Greek *hypoleipsis*, the technical term for the apparent movement of planets eastward along the ecliptic: they are always being "left behind" (Greek *hypoleipesthai*) by the stars, which appear to move westward. Again, this is not connected with early Pythagorean theory. The "beings between" may be those sometimes postulated (Aristotle, *On the Heaven* 293b 21-30) to explain why lunar eclipses are more frequent than solar eclipses: they block the view of the moon from the earth. For the rest of the paragraph cf. 58-9 and note.

33-5 Kroton: Vatai p.42-5. P. might have heard about it from Demokedes of Kroton (see 261-2n.), physician to Polykrates of Samos, or have known about its cult (attested on coins) of Pythian Apollo. I. dates P.'s arrival to 516-3 BC (35); Justin, epitomator (C3 AD) of Pompeius Trogus (C1 AD), who probably follows the Sicilian historian Timaeus (C4-3 BC), sets it after a disastrous defeat of Kroton by Lokroi, which was probably c.540-30 BC (Justin 20.4; T.Dunbabin, *The Western Greeks* 1948, 358ff). P. then engages in moral rearmament. For

Katana, Rhegion, Himera, Akragas, Tauromenion, and others. He also made laws for them, acting through Charondas of Katana and Zaleukos of Lokroi, which gave them for many years to come excellent government and the well-deserved envy of their neighbours. (34) Faction, disagreement, in a word, divergence of opinion, he utterly abolished, not only among his followers and their descendants for (it is said) many generations, but in general from all the cities of Italy and Sicily, both in their domestic affairs and in their relations with each other. There was a pregnant saying, like the advice of an oracle, which summed up and epitomised his beliefs: he addressed it to everyone everywhere, both the few and the many. "These things are to be avoided by every means, eradicated by fire or iron or any other means: disease from the body, ignorance from the soul, luxury from the belly, faction from the city, division from the household, excess from everything." This was an affectionate reminder to everyone of the best beliefs. (35) This, then, was his characteristic way of life, in speech and action, at this time.

8 His visit to Kroton, his actions on his first visit and his address to the young men.

A more detailed account of what he said and did may be needed. He arrived in Italy, then, in the sixty-second Olympiad, in which Eryxias of Chalkis won the foot-race. At once he was gazed at and followed about, just as he had been when he sailed to Delos. There the people in the island had marvelled that he offered prayers only at the altar of Apollo Genetor, who alone receives no blood sacrifice. (36) This time, travelling from Sybaris to Kroton, he came upon some fishermen on the shore. They were still hauling in their net, full of fish, under water, but he told them how big a catch they were pulling, giving the exact number of fish. The men said they would do whatever he told them, if it proved to be true. He told them to count the fish carefully,

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what is known of Charondas and Zaleukos see Dunbabin 68-74; 172 below adds some otherwise unknown legislators from Rhegion (von Fritz p.57 thinks Theaitetos there = Theokles 130 = Euthykles 267). Other South Italian and Sicilian cities: Dunbabin ch.10-12.

35-6 Apollo Genetor: see 25n. Other examples of superhuman powers 134-6, 142-3; see on 68-70.

and to let them go alive. What was even more remarkable, not one of the fish died while he stood by, though they were out of water for all the time it took to count them. He gave the fishermen the price of their catch, and went on to Kroton. They spread the story, and told everyone his name, which they learnt from the servants. Those who heard wanted to see the stranger, and that was easy, for his appearance was such as to strike awe into those who saw him, and made them aware of his true nature. (37) A few days later he went to the gymnasium. The young men flocked round him, and tradition says that he addressed them, urging them to respect their elders. He demonstrated that in the universe, in life, in cities, in nature, that which comes before is more honoured than that which follows in time. Thus sunrise is more honoured than sunset, dawn more than evening, beginning more than end, coming to be more than passing away. Likewise natives are more honoured than incomers, and similarly in colonies the founders and settlers of cities receive more honour. In general, the gods are more honoured than spirits, spirits more than demigods, heroes more than humans, and among them those who caused the birth of the younger ones. (38) He said this to induce them to value their parents more highly. They owed them, he said, all that gratitude that would be felt by a man who had died for the one who had been able to bring him back to life. It was just to love above all, and never grieve, those who are our earliest and greatest benefactors. Our parents alone are our first benefactors, even before our birth, and ancestors are responsible for all the achievements of their descendants. We cannot go wrong if we show the gods that we do good to our parents before all others. The gods, we may suppose, will pardon those who honour their parents above all, for our parents taught us to honour the gods. (39) That is why Homer exalts the king of the gods with that very title, calling him "father of gods and mortals", and why many other makers of myths have given us the story that the rulers of the gods competed to have for themselves the love of their

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37-57 Krotoniate sermons: de Vogel ch.6 discusses these in detail, and argues for C4 BC circulation preserving authentic tradition.

39 Ethical interpretation of a dubious myth. Traditionally, this was first done by Theagenes of Rhegion, C5 BC; examples from late antique

children, which is divided between the parents who are joined together. That is why each took on the role both of father and of mother. Zeus brought forth Athena, Hera brought forth Hephaistos, each offspring of the sex opposite to that of the parent, so as to share in a love which was more remote from them. (40) All present agreed that the judgement of the immortals was sure. Then he told the Krotoniates that, as their founders were kin to Herakles, they must willingly obey their parents' commands. They had heard how he, a god, underwent his labours in obedience to a senior god, and had founded the Olympics in honour of his father, as a victory-celebration of his achievements. The path to success in their relations with one another was to treat their friends as if they would never be enemies, and their enemies as if they would soon be friends, and to practise in courtesy to their elders the good will they had for their parents, and in kindness to others the fellow-feeling they had for their brothers. (41) Next he talked about self-control. Youth, he said, was the testing-time of nature, when desires are at their strongest. He advised them to consider that this, alone among the virtues, deserved the efforts of boys and girls, women and old people, and especially young men. Furthermore, he said, self-control alone embraces the good of body and soul alike, safeguarding health and the desire for the best habits of life. (42) This was obvious, he said, from the opposite way of living. Greeks and foreigners fought at Troy, and many fell victim to terrible disasters in the war or on the voyage home, all for one

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philosophy in Sheppard ch.4 and in Lamberton. Zeus swallowed Metis ("shrewdness") after a warning that her child would be greater than he; Athene sprang fully-armed from his head.

40 Herakles: see 50 and note.

42 The leading families of (Opuntian) Lokroi, in central Greece, sent two girls to serve in Athene's temple at Ilion (Troy) in expiation of the rape of Cassandra there by their ancestor Ajax the Less (who was honoured by cult at Western Lokroi in South Italy). This practice, supposed to continue for a thousand years after the fall of Troy, was suspended in the C4 BC but resumed in the C2 BC. See further F.Walbank, *A Historical Commentary On Polybius* II (1967) 335. "Men of virtue" translates *hoi kaloi kagathoi ton andron*.

man's lack of control. The god decreed both a ten-year and a thousand-year sentence for this one crime, prophesying both the capture of Troy and the Locrians' sending back the maidens to the temple of Athena Ilias. He also encouraged the young men to seek education, telling them to reflect how absurd it would be to think intelligence the greatest asset, and use it to deliberate on other matters, but not to invest any time or effort in training the intelligence. Concern for the body, like friends of no account, quickly leaves us in the lurch, but education, like men of virtue, remains with us until death — and for some even after death, creating immortal fame. (43) He gave them many other arguments, some from history, some from philosophy, to show that education is the collective genius of those outstanding in every subject, for their discoveries have become the education of others. Education is by its nature so important, that whereas other objects of praise either cannot be got from someone else (like strength and beauty and health and courage) or cannot be kept if you give them away (like riches and office and many others), education can be got from someone else and can be given away without loss. (44) Again, some things cannot be got by human effort, but we can all be educated by our own choice, and can then be seen to take up our country's business not out of self-conceit, but because of our education. It is upbringing which distinguishes humans from beasts, Greeks from foreigners, free men from household slaves, and philosophers from ordinary people. And philosophers are so far above the rest, that whereas seven men from one city — their own — had been found to run faster than the rest at Olympia, only seven men in the whole inhabited world could be counted among the first in wisdom. But in later times, his own times, one man surpassed all others in philosophy: this was what he called himself, "philosopher" (lover of wisdom) not "sage". (45) This, then, is what he said to the young men in the gymnasium.

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44 "Philosopher": see 58n. For the seven wise men (the Seven Sages) see Burn (l.c. n.11); Strabo 262 says that in one Olympic race the first seven runners were all from Kroton.

9 His address to the Thousand who governed the city, on the best ways of speaking and habits of life.

The young men told their fathers what Pythagoras had said, and the Thousand summoned him to the council. First they thanked him for what he had said to their sons, then they asked him, if he had good advice for the people of Kroton, to give it to those in charge of government. He advised them first to found a temple of the Muses, to preserve their existing concord. These goddesses, he said, all had the same name, went together in the tradition, and were best pleased by honours to all in common. The chorus of the Muses was always one and the same, and they had charge of unison, harmony and rhythm, all that goes to make up concord. He explained that their power extends not only to the most splendid objects of thought, but also to the concert and harmony of being. (46) Next he said that they must think of their country as a deposit made with them all by the mass of citizens, and must manage it so that they could hand on to their descendants what was entrusted. And that would certainly be so, if they treated all the citizens fairly, and attended above all to what is just. People know that justice is needed everywhere, so they made the myth that Themis ranks with Zeus as Dike does with Pluto and as law does in cities, in order to make it clear that a man who does not deal justly with his charge thereby commits a crime against all the universe. (47) He said that councillors should not swear by any of the gods: they should deal in words which would be trustworthy without oaths. They should so manage their own households that their political principles could be referred to the standard of their private conduct. They should be generously disposed towards their children, for among other animals only people can grasp that idea, and each should

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45 Nothing is known of the political composition of the Thousand, the council which ruled Kroton. For the Muses, see P.Boyancé, *Le Culte Des Muses Chez Les Philosophes Grecs* (1936) part 3 ch.1.

46 Themis is the personification of (customary) law, the way things should be; Dike of justice. For Pluto see 123.

47 "among other animals": reading *monous...eilephotas*, as in the

behave to the woman who shares his life in the awareness that his contracts with others are set down in documents and inscriptions, but his contract with his wife is recorded in their children. They should try to be loved by their descendants not by nature, for which they were not responsible, but by choice, for that is a benefit voluntarily given. (48) They should also be resolved that they would know only their wives, and that their wives should not adulterate the line because their partners neglect and injure them. A man should think that his wife was brought to him in the sight of the gods, like a suppliant, taken with libations from the hearth. He should set an example of discipline and self-control both to the household of which he is head and to those in the city; he should ensure that no-one does the slightest injury to anyone, so that instead of committing surreptitious crimes in fear of the legal penalty, they strive for justice out of respect for his nobility of character. (49) As for action, he urged them to reject inactivity: good, he said, was nothing other than the right moment for any action. The greatest crime is to alienate parents and children. The best man is the one who can himself foresee what is beneficial, the second best he who realises, from the experience of others, what is profitable, and the worst he who waits until he learns from suffering to see what is best. People who seek honour will not go wrong if they copy those who win races: their aim is not to injure their opponents, but to achieve victory. People engaged in politics should help their supporters, not obstruct their opponents. Anyone who wants a truly good reputation, he said, should be as he would like to appear to others. Good advice is less holy than praise, for advice is needed only for people, but praise is required

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manuscripts. Deubner emends so that "other animals grasp this idea, if no other".

48 A suppliant invoked the protection of the god by contact with a sacred place. The hearth is one such, sacred to Hestia, the unmarried daughter of Zeus. Anyone who took the suppliant's right hand (as in the marriage ritual) accepted responsibility for his or her welfare.

for the gods. (50) He concluded by saying that, according to tradition, their city was founded by Herakles when he drove the cattle through Italy. He was injured by Lakinios, and unwittingly killed Kroton, who had come at night to help him, thinking he was one of the enemy. Herakles then promised to found a city named Kroton at his tomb, if he himself achieved immortality. So they were bound to administer it justly, in gratitude for the kindness Herakles had returned. Having heard him, they founded the temple of the Muses, and sent away the concubines it had been their custom to keep. And they asked him to speak separately to the children in the Pythaion, and the women in the temple of Hera.

10 His advice to the children of Kroton, in the Pythaion, on his first visit.

(51) He agreed, and began by telling the children never to start a quarrel or to fight back against the ones who did, and to work hard at their education, which was called after their time of life. Then he said that a good child would find it easy to stay a good person throughout life, but one with a bad disposition at this critical time would find it difficult, not to say impossible, to finish well from a poor start. Further, he showed that the gods love children best of all, and that is why, when there is a drought, the cities send them to ask the gods for water: the divine power will listen most readily to them, and they alone, being always pure, have permanent permission to be in sacred places. (52) That, he said, is why everyone paints or portrays

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50 Several cities in South Italy and Sicily had cults of Herakles, who - according to legend - had visited them in the course of his tenth labour, driving the cattle of Geryon from the west to the Peloponnese. DS 4.24.7 tells the story that Herakles promised to found Kroton, and (8.17) how the Delphic Oracle instructed Myskellos to do so. The Lakinian promontory was just south of Kroton.

51-2 "Called after their time of life": children are *paides*, education *paideia*. Apollo killed the monster Pytho, and earned his title Pythios, while still a baby, but is usually portrayed as a youth. Melikertes was the son of Ino-Leukothea, who jumped with him into the sea at the Isthmus of Corinth; Archemoros was killed by a snake, at Nemea, while his nurse showed the Seven Against Thebes where to find water.



Apollo and Eros, the gods who most love humans, as children. And everyone agrees that some of the games where you win a crown were founded because of children: the Pythian games after a boy had defeated Pytho, the Nemean and Isthmian for the sake of children, after the deaths of Archemoros and Melikertos. And besides these stories, when Kroton was founded, Apollo promised the leader of the settlement to give him descendants if he took a colony to Italy. (53) So they must realise that Apollo had a special concern for their birth, and all the gods had a special concern for childhood, and they must deserve the love of the gods and practice listening so as to be able to speak. They should start at once on the path they would tread to old age, following those who had gone before and not answering back to their elders. Then they might reasonably expect, later on, that younger people would respect them. It is agreed that these moral discourses made everyone stop using the name Pythagoras, and call him instead "the divine".

11 His address to the women of Kroton, in the temple of Hera, on his first visit.

(54) His address to the women began on the subject of sacrifices. If someone were going to offer prayers for them, he said, they would want it to be a good man, such as the gods would favour. So they too must set the highest value on goodness, so that the gods will be ready to respond to their prayers. He told them that what they planned to offer the gods should be made with their own hands and carried to the altar without the help of servants: cakes, pastry models, honey, incense. They should not honour the divine power by bloodshed and death, nor should they spend much at one time as though they had no intention of coming back. As for their relationship with their husbands, they should realise that even fathers concede it is natural for a woman to love the man who has married her more than the man who gave her birth. So it is right not to oppose your husband, or else to count it as your victory when he has got his way. (55) It was to this meeting of women that he made his famous remark: "A woman who has slept with her husband may

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55 The famous remark is ascribed to Theano at 132. Sexual intercourse caused (brief) ritual pollution : Robert Parker, *Miasma*(1983) 74-5. Women's loans: cf. Aristophanes, *Women At The Assembly* (Ekklesiazousai) 446-51: the more

go that same day to the temples; if it was not her husband, never." He also urged them to say little, and that good, all their lives, and see that what others could say of them was good. They should not ruin their inherited reputation and disprove the myth-makers, who saw the justice of women in their lending clothes and jewels, when someone else needed them, without a witness, and without any lawsuits and quarrels arising from the loan. So they told of three women who, because of their cooperation, used one eye in common. If they had told that story of men, saying that the one who had the eye first cheerfully gave it back and willingly shared what he had, no-one would have believed it: it is not in men's nature. (56) That one called wisest of all, he said, the god or spirit or godlike human who created human language and invented all the words, saw that women have a very close connection with piety, and named each stage of a woman's life after a god. An unmarried girl is *kore*, one given to a man is *nymphē*, one who has borne children is *meter*, one who has seen her children's children has the Doric name *maia*. And it accords with this that the oracles of Dodona and Delphi are revealed through a woman. Tradition says that his praise of piety caused so great a change in them, in favour of simplicity of dress, that not one of them ventured to wear her expensive clothes, and they dedicated all these — thousands of them — in the temple of Hera. (57) He is said also to have explained that a famous instance of a man's virtuous conduct to his wife occurred near Kroton, when Odysseus refused to accept immortality from Calypso at the cost of deserting

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striking because clothes and jewels were their only acknowledged possessions. The three women are the Graiai (see Mark Griffith on Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 793-800). "To say little and that good" attempts to translate Greek *euphemein*, which means both "speak well" and "be silent".

56-7 For names as revealing the true nature of things, see Lamberton 39, 86-90, 164-73; for the divine origin of language (as in Plato, *Kratylos*) and especially of divine names, see Sheppard 90-1 and 138-41. Kore is Persephone, daughter of Demeter who is sometimes equated with Kybebe, the Phrygian Great Mother or Meter. Nymphs are lesser deities of rivers and springs. Maia is the mother of Hermes. The location of Odysseus's wanderings in Sicily and Italy is said by Strabo(1.23) to go back to Hesiod.

Penelope. Now it was for the women to show their nobility of character to their husbands, and redress the balance of fame. Tradition says that these addresses brought Pythagoras outstanding honour and enthusiasm from the people of Kroton and from there throughout Italy.

12 His beliefs about philosophy, and why he was the first to call himself "philosopher".

(58) Pythagoras is said to have been the first person to call himself a philosopher. It was not just a new word that he invented: he used it to explain a concern special to him. He said that people approach life like the crowds that gather at a festival. People come from all around, for different reasons: one is eager to sell his wares and make a profit, another to win fame by displaying his physical strength; and there is a third kind, the best sort of free man, who come to see places and fine craftsmanship and excellence in action and words, such as are generally on display at festivals. Just so, in life, people with all kinds of concerns assemble in one place. Some hanker after money and an easy life; some are in the clutches of desire for power and of frantic competition for fame; but the person of the greatest authority is the one who has chosen the study of that which is finest, and that one we call a philosopher. (59) Heaven in its entirety, he said, and the stars in their courses, is a fine sight if one can see its order. But it is so by participation in the

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58-9 Herakleides of Pontus claimed (fr.129 Wehrli) that P. invented the term "philosopher"; cf. DS 10.10.1, P. said only the gods have wisdom (*sophia*): the most we can have is the love of wisdom (*philosophia*). Burkert LS 65 disputes the claim. In the festival analogy, *theoria* moves from its original sense of "seeing" or "visiting" (especially by a delegation sent to an oracle or a religious festival) to its philosophical usage of "intellectual vision", which requires both hard intellectual work and the focussing of the mind on changeless reality, not worldly concerns (Dorothy Emmet, JTS ns 17(1966)38-52). On the tradition of P. as contemplative, see L.B.Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (1986) 133-7. The cosmic order was often used as an argument for the existence of (visible) gods. I. here makes P. give a Platonist account (expanded at 159-60) of reality. We cannot have knowledge of anything which (like the cosmic order) changes, or is different in relation to different things: we can only have a belief which is, for the

primary and intelligible. And what is primary is number and rational order permeating all there is: all things are ranged in their proper and harmonious order in accordance with these. Wisdom is real knowledge, not requiring effort, concerned with those beautiful things which are primary, divine, pure, unchanging: other things may be called beautiful if they participate in these. Philosophy is zeal for such study. Concern for education is beautiful too, working with Pythagoras for the amendment of humanity.

13 Several examples of Pythagoras' ability to give rational education to beasts and non-rational animals.

(60) If we may believe the many ancient and valuable sources who report it, Pythagoras had a power of relaxing tension and giving instruction in what he said which reached even non-rational animals. He inferred that, as everything comes to rational creatures by teaching, it must be so also for wild creatures which are believed not to be rational. They say he laid hands on the Daunian she-bear, which had done most serious damage to the people there. He stroked her for a long time, feeding her bits of bread and fruit, administered an oath that she would no longer catch any living creature, and let her go. She made straight for the hills and the woods, and was never again

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moment, correct. Such objects of belief owe not only their qualities (e.g. beauty) but their very existence to transcendent unchanging "forms" (Plato's term) or universals, here called "primary and intelligible" because they are prior to other existents and they can be known. "Participation" (*metousia*, *metechain*) is the technical term for the relationship of particular things to transcendent reality. Aristotle discussed what Pythagoreans meant by number as primary, and how it related to Plato's "forms": see references at 31n. In the last sentence of 59, "together with P." seems the only possible sense for the Greek *autoi*.

60 Non-rational animals are analogous to the part of the human soul which, in Plato's threefold division (*Republic* 4), is not itself rational but can obey reason. Deubner thinks P's power is called *analytikón* in the medical sense, "relaxing", not in the philosophical sense "analysing": he is probably right, since I. does not say that the non-rational animals followed a rational argument. I think the translation "he inferred...not to be rational" gives the only possible sense of the Greek; but if the Greek is right, the argument is unconvincing.

61 The first appearance of the most notorious Pythagorean tenet: no

seen to attack even a non-rational animal. (61) At Taras he saw an ox, in a field of mixed fodder, munching on ripe beans as well. He went over to the oxherd and advised him to tell the ox to abstain from beans. The oxherd made fun of his suggestion. "I don't speak Ox," he said, "and if you do you're wasting your advice on me: you should warn the ox." So Pythagoras went up and spent a long time whispering in the bull's ear. The bull promptly stopped eating the bean-plant, of his own accord, and they say he never ate beans again. He lived to a very great age at Taras, growing old in the temple of Hera. Everyone called him "Pythagoras' holy bull" and he ate a human diet, offered him by people who met him.

(62) He happened once to be talking to his students, at the Olympic games, about omens and messages from the the gods brought by birds, saying that eagles too bring news to those the gods really love. An eagle flew overhead: he called it down, stroked it, and let it go. It is clear from these stories, and others like them, that he had the command of Orpheus over wild creatures, charming them and holding them fast with the power of his voice.

14 The starting-point of his system of education was recall of the lives which souls had lived before entering the bodies they now happen to inhabit.

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beans. Ancients and moderns have offered many explanations: beans (*vicia faba*, the broad bean) have special affinities with human flesh; their nodeless stems offer human souls a route to earth from the underworld; bean-induced flatulence disturbs dreams (106); beans mean votes (260). The preferred modern explanation is favism, an acute allergic reaction to beans and especially their pollen, which results from a genetic deficiency widespread in southern Italy. See D tienne GA 49-51; M.Grn k, *Diseases in the Ancient World* (ET 1989) ch.5. The "human diet" of the ox would be grain-based (like that of horses).

63 The second famous tenet: reincarnation, which requires the immortality of the soul (for possible versions of the argument, Barnes I.6; for the tradition, Philip ch.10). The Homer passage is *Iliad* 17.51-60: *Iliad* 16. 849-50 might allow the identification of Euphorbos with Apollo (Burkert LS 140-1, with other explanations). The "popular stories" are in DL 8.4-5 and DS 10.6.2: P. recognised a shield which proved to have "Euphorbos's" written inside, in archaic letters.

(63) In educating humans he had an excellent starting-point: it was something, he said, which had to be understood, if people were to learn the truth in other matters. He aroused in many of those he met a most clear and vivid remembrance of an earlier life which their souls had lived long ago, before being bound to this present body. He gave indisputable proofs that he himself had been Euphorbos son of Panthoos, the opponent of Patroklos, and the lines of Homer he most frequently recited, or sang to a melodious accompaniment on the lyre, were those on the death of Euphorbos:

"His hair, like the hair of the Graces, braided with gold and silver, was soaked with blood. A man grows a flourishing olive-sapling in a lonely place, where a spring of water bubbles up, a lovely luxuriant tree, swaying in the breezes which blow from all sides, and laden with white flowers. Then a gust of wind, sudden and violent, uproots it from its trench and stretches it out on the ground. Such was Euphorbos, son of Panthoos, with his ash spear, when Menelaos son of Atreus killed him and stripped off his armour."

We will pass over the popular stories of the shield of this Euphorbos, which is dedicated, with other Trojan spoils, to Argive Hera at Mycenae. The one point we wish to make from it all is this: Pythagoras knew his own previous lives, and began his training of others by awakening their memory of an earlier existence.

15 How he first led people to education, through the senses; how he restored the souls of his associates through music, and how he himself had restoration in its most perfect form.

(64) He thought that the training of people begins with the senses, when we see beautiful shapes and forms and hear beautiful rhythms and melodies. So the first stage of his system of education was music: songs and rhythms from which came healing of human temperaments and passions. The original

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64-7 Music: see on 115. Music of the spheres, see 82n: the harmonic ratios (fourth, fifth and octave) which can be constructed from the first four numbers

harmony of the soul's powers was restored, and Pythagoras devised remission, and complete recovery, from diseases affecting both body and soul. It is especially remarkable that he orchestrated for his pupils what they call "arrangements" and "treatments". He made, with supernatural skill, blends of diatonic and chromatic and enharmonic melodies, which easily transformed into their opposites the maladies of the soul which had lately without reason arisen, or were beginning to grow, in his students: grief, anger, pity; misplaced envy, fear; all kinds of desires, appetite, wanting; empty conceit, depression, violence. All these he restored to virtue, using the appropriate melodies like mixtures of curative drugs.

(65) When his disciples, of an evening, were thinking of sleep, he rid them of the daily troubles which buzzed about them, and purified their minds of the turbid thoughts which had washed over them: he made their sleep peaceful and supplied with pleasant, even prophetic, dreams. And when they got up, he freed them from the torpor, lassitude and sluggishness that comes in the night, using his own special songs and melodies, unaccompanied, singing to the lyre or with the voice alone. He no longer used musical instruments or songs to create order in himself: through some unutterable, almost inconceivable likeness to the gods, his hearing and his mind were intent upon the celestial harmonies of the cosmos. It seemed as if he alone could hear and understand the universal harmony and music of the spheres and of the stars which move within them, uttering a song more complete and satisfying than any human melody, composed of subtly varied sounds of motion and speeds and sizes and positions, organized in a logical and harmonious relation to each other, and achieving a melodious circuit of subtle and exceptional beauty.

(66) Refreshed by this, and by regulating and exercising his reasoning powers thereby, he conceived the idea of giving his

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govern both music and the cosmos (Aristotle, *On The Heaven* 290b12-291a28). The quotation from Empedokles (67) is fr.129, translated KRS 218-9; see also Barnes II.193-205. He came from Akragas in Sicily and may have

disciples some image of these things, imitating them, so far as it was possible, through musical instruments or the unaccompanied voice. He believed that he, alone of those on earth, could hear and understand the utterance of the universe, and that he was worthy to learn from the fountain-head and origin of existence, and to make himself, by effort and imitation, like the heavenly beings; the divine power which brought him to birth had given him alone this fortunate endowment. Other people, he thought, must be content to look to him, and to derive their profit and improvement from the images and models he offered them as gifts, since they were not able truly to apprehend the pure, primary archetypes.

(67) When people cannot look directly at the sun, because of the brilliance of its rays, we find ways to show them an eclipse, with a deep container of water or a film of pitch or a black-backed mirror, sparing their weak eyesight and devising an alternative way of understanding, which they are happy to accept even though it is less exact. Empedokles too seems to have said this, in riddling words, about him and his exceptional and god-given endowment:

Among them was a man of exceptional knowledge,  
who had very great riches of understanding,  
one who ruled over all works of wisdom.

When he reached out with the full range of his mind  
he easily surveyed everything there is,  
over ten or twenty generations of men.

"Exceptional" and "surveyed everything there is" and "riches of understanding" and other such expressions allude to his uniquely refined endowment of vision, hearing and thought.

16 The purificatory regime which he too employed; the more advanced practice of friendship which also prepared those suited to philosophy.

(68) This, then, is how he used music for the "arrangement"

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had Pythagorean contacts in the mid C5 BC: his *Purifications* (cf. 68) opposed animal sacrifice because the animal might be the home of a reincarnated human soul.

68-70 The pagan ascetic life: training (*askesis*) of body and mind by self-



of souls. He also practiced another kind of purification of the mind and soul together, using a variety of methods. He required vigour in tackling the hard work of learning and training; and it was a basic rule for those who undertook them to apply ingenious trials and chastisements and onslaughts "by fire and sword" to the self-indulgence and greed which are innate in all of us. No bad man could endure these and persevere. He also taught his disciples to abstain from all living things and from certain foods which hinder the pure and keen operation of reason; to "hold their peace" or to be entirely silent, which trained them for years in the control of the tongue; and to practice intense and unremitting pursuit and practice of the most abstruse theoretical studies.

(69) For the same reasons he enjoined abstinence from wine, frugal diet, and rationing of sleep; spontaneous contempt for fame, wealth and the like, and resistance to them; sincere reverence for those who have gone before, unfeigned goodwill and fellow-feeling for one's peers, willing encouragement, without envy, of those younger than oneself, and friendship of all for all. Friendship of gods for humans, through piety and

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examination, by a lifestyle which allows the real needs of the body to be met without spiritual disturbance, and by peace and quiet (Fowden 57). See 96-100 for the daily regime, and 29-30n for the Christian parallels. Purification is a concept of great importance to I. Building on Plato (*Phaedo* 64a, 67cd; *Republic* 521c) he hopes to purify the soul from the contamination of desire and of material existence, both by hard rational thought and by rituals which, in earlier tradition, had "purified" blood-guilt, insanity and other forms of ritual impurity. *Philia*, here conventionally translated "friendship", is a sense of belonging: as the force of attraction, balanced by the force of repulsion ("strife"), it keeps the universe in being. For I. it is *philia* which unifies each level of reality; it is also *philia* which links the higher and lower levels, making it possible for the human soul, with the gods' help, to approach the divine. *Philia* also brings about "sympathy" (shared feeling) in the lower levels of reality which are bound by the laws of the cosmos (*On The Mysteries* 3.27): an event at one place has effects elsewhere which can be interpreted by those specially gifted in "divination" (as at 36 and 92). This is "artificial mantic", the reading of signs within the sensible world, and it is different from "natural mantic" in which the soul, released in ecstasy or dream, contemplates the causal principles of the world. Dreams (70) are, traditionally, sent by gods or *daimones* when the soul is free from the sleeping body. See further 138n.

worship based on knowledge; friendship of one doctrine for another, of soul for body and the reasoning part for the unreasoning, achieved through philosophy and the study it entails; friendship of people for one another: fellow-citizens through a healthy respect for law, different peoples through a proper understanding of nature, a man with his wife or brothers and intimates through unswerving partnership; in short, friendship of all for all, including some of the non-rational animals through justice and natural connection and partnership; even the mortal body's pacification and reconciliation of the opposing powers hidden within itself, through health and a lifestyle and practice of temperance which promotes health, and imitates the flourishing of the cosmic elements. (70) All these may be summed up in that one word "friendship", and Pythagoras is the acknowledged founding father of it all.

He was also the cause of his disciples' holding converse with the gods in the form best suited to us, waking visions and dreams. Dreams do not come to the soul which is turbid with anger or distracted with grief or pleasure or some other shameful desire — and especially not if the soul suffers that most unholy and intractable ailment, ignorance. Pythagoras, with supernatural power, healed all these, purified the soul and rekindled the divine spark in it, restored and redirected to the object of thought that divine eye whose security, as Plato says, is more important than that of a thousand bodily eyes. Only to the one who sees with that eye, having strengthened and articulated it with the proper aids, is the true nature of things perceptible. His purification of the mind was directed to this, and this was the character and aim of his system of education.

17 Pythagoras' examination of followers when they first approached him, and his methods of testing their characters

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69 The Greek text would allow the "non-rational animals" to be friends with each other or with humans. I think the reference is to the "social animals" (philosophers were impressed with bees).

70 The Plato reference is *Republic* 527de.

before he began their introduction to philosophy.

(71) Since this was the education he could offer his disciples, he would not immediately accept young men who came and wanted to study with him, until he had put them through an examination and made a judgement. He asked first how they got on with their parents and other members of the family. Then he considered whether they laughed at the wrong moment, whether they could be silent and whether they talked too much, what their desires were, which of his students they knew and how they behaved towards them, how they spent their days, what made them happy or sad. He also considered their physical form, their walk and their general coordination, using their physical characteristics as visible evidence of the habits of soul that could not be seen.

(72) The person he had examined was then sent away and ignored for three years, to test his constancy and his genuine love of learning, and to see whether he had the right attitude to reputation and was able to despise status. After this, he imposed a five-year silence on his adherents, to test their self-control: control of the tongue, he thought, is the most difficult type of self-control, a truth made apparent to us by those who established the mysteries. During this time each one's property was held in common, entrusted to particular students who were called "civil servants" and who managed the finances and made the rules. If the candidates were found worthy to share in the teachings, judging by their life and general principles, then after the five-year silence they joined the inner circle: now, within the veil, they could both hear and see Pythagoras. Before this they were outside the veil: they never saw Pythagoras and shared his discourses only through hearing, and their character was tested over a long period. (73) If one failed the test, he was given double

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72 "Mysteries" are literally things to be kept silent, specifically things known only to initiates in the mystery-cults, who were under oath not to reveal them. Philosophers often used "mystery-language" of philosophic doctrines (Sheppard ch.4). For the "civil servants" and the "inner circle" see 80n.

his property, and his fellow-hearers (that is what all Pythagoras' followers were called) built a grave-mound for him as if he were dead. When they met, they behaved as if it were someone else: the man they had moulded, expecting that his studies would produce a good man, they spoke of as dead. The people who found learning hard they thought of as handicapped and sterile.

(74) So if someone, after having given them good hopes of him from his assessment on appearance and walk and coordination, after the five-year silence, after the experiences of initiation into mystic rites afforded by the great teachings, after the tremendous purifications of the soul which result from such profound doctrines, bringing to birth in everyone a keen and clear awareness in the soul — if, after all this, he was still found to be difficult to rouse and slow to follow, they would build a grave-mound and set up a tombstone in the school (it is said they did so for Perillos of Thourioi and for Kylon, a commander of Sybaris, whom they rejected) and expel him from the auditorium, loading him with gold and silver (for they had common stores of these, administered by people suited to the task whom they called, from their office, "managers"). If they ever met him in another context, they held him to be anyone rather than the man who, for them, was dead.

(75) That is why Lysis, reproaching one Hipparchos for sharing his teaching with mere adherents who have not been properly inducted and who lack learning and instruction, says:

"You say we should philosophise in public, for whoever comes along. Pythagoras said not, and so you learnt, Hipparchos, in all seriousness. But you did not keep the teaching safe. You had a taste of Sicilian high living, man, though you should have got the better of it. If you change, I shall rejoice; if not, you are dead. It is right, they say, to keep in memory his commands on divine and human matters, and not to share the goods of wisdom

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74 Kylon: see 248; Perillos is not otherwise known. "Managers": see 80n.

75-7 Lysis (185, 249-50) was one of the "last Pythagoreans". He escaped from the C5 revolt (see 248-64n) to Achaia in mainland Greece, then went to Thebes where he taught Epaminondas. The letter ascribed to him is written

with people whose souls are not remotely purified. It is not right to hand out to chance-met persons what was achieved with so much effort and toil, nor yet to expound to the uninitiated the mysteries of the Two Goddesses of Eleusis — those who do either are equally wrong and impious.

(76) Think how long a time we spent cleansing the stains which were ingrained in our breasts, until, with the passage of the years, we were able to receive his words. As dyers cleanse and treat with a mordant the parts of the garment which need to be dyed, so that the dye will be fast and will never fade or be lost in the wash, so that wonderful man prepared the souls of those who had fallen in love with wisdom, so that he should not be disappointed in one of those he hoped would become good men. He did not purvey false words or the snares with which most sophists, working for no good purpose, entrap young men: he knew about divine and human affairs. But those others make his teaching a pretext and do terrible things, hunting young men in the wrong way and of set purpose.

(77) So they make their pupils intractable and wilful. They pour doctrines and divine discourses into troubled, turbid characters, as if you were to pour clear, pure water into a deep well choked with mud: it stirs up the mud and the water disappears. Teachers and pupils of this kind are alike: there are great shaggy thickets growing round the minds and hearts of those whose passion for learning is impure, overshadowing all that is gentle and mild and reasonable in the soul and preventing the reasoning power from growth and development in the open.

Perhaps I should first name their mothers, Self-indulgence and Greed: each one has many children. (78) From Self-indulgence spring unholy wedlock, corruption, drunkenness, unnatural pleasures, and passionate desires which pursue their

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in "Pythagorean Doric" (see 241), consciously terse and rich in images: see Thesleff in *Entretiens Hardt* (2n), and Delatte *Litt II*. DL 8.42 makes the addressee Hippasos (see 80n). A mordant (76) is a chemical (e.g. alum) which "bites" the fabric so that the dye takes.

object even to the pit and the precipice. Desires have compelled some not to hold back even from their mothers or their daughters; thrusting aside, like a tyrant, the city and the law, they twist their victim's arms behind his back and drag him off by force, like a captive, to thrust him into total ruin. The offspring of Greed are robbery, piracy, parricide, temple-robbing, poisoning, and all their siblings. So we must first clear the scrub in which these passions flourish, using fire and iron and all the techniques of learning, rescue the reason and free it from these great evils, and only then plant in it some useful learning from our store."

(79) Pythagoras thought it as essential as that to devote so much care to learning before one practices philosophy. He set the highest value on teaching and sharing of his doctrines, and made the most detailed investigation, testing and assessing the beliefs of those who came to him, and deploying varieties of teaching and numerous kinds of scientific knowledge.

18 How and why Pythagoras divided his disciples into kinds.

(80) Now let us discuss how he divided those he had assessed according to their merit. It was not right that all should have the same share of the same, for not all were alike in nature; but neither was it right that some should share in all the most valuable teachings and some in none at all, for that would be a failure of community feeling and fairness. But by giving each the appropriate share of the relevant teachings he ensured benefit for all, so far as they were capable, and also safeguarded the

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80 There are conflicting traditions here. The main problem was whether the true tradition was preserved by Hearers ("acousmatics") or Learners ("mathematics": *mathemata*, "things learnt", were not restricted to what we call maths until the mid C4 BC): see Burkert LS II.5. Philip 138-46 argues that the problem derives from Aristoxenos in the C4 BC: he wanted enlightened "Learners" rather than the hippy "Hearers" familiar as Pythagoreans in C4 comedy. I. wants the Learners to be the acknowledged Pythagoreans: in 81 they do not acknowledge the Hearers, in 87 they do. The two passages stand together in I. *On General Mathematical Science* (ed. N.Festa 1891, p.76.19ff), but there the first passage

principle of justice by giving each one the teaching he deserved. So, on this system, he called some Pythagoreans and some Pythagorisers (just as we call some people Atticists and some Atticisers): the distinction of names appropriately marked out some as real followers and some as aspirants to their status.

(81) He ruled that the Pythagoreans should have their property in common and should live together in perpetuity; the others were to keep their private property but should meet and study together. That is how the succession to Pythagoras came to take both forms. There were also two kinds of philosophy in another way, for there were two kinds of people undertaking it, the Hearers and the Learners. The Learners were acknowledged as Pythagoreans by the others, but did not themselves acknowledge the Hearers, saying that their concerns derived not from Pythagoras but from Hippasos. (Some say Hippasos came from Kroton, some from Metapontion.)

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reverses Hearers and Learners: that is, the Learners acknowledge the Hearers as a lower grade, but the Hearers claim that true Pythagoreanism is obedience to P.'s word, not the false model of further research established by the C5 BC mathematician Hippasos (88, 246-7). I. has probably modified the first passage, in the *Life*, to give what he thinks is the right result (Burkert LS 193-4). The groups inside and outside the veil (72), like the Pythagoreans and Pythagorisers (80) are meant to correspond to Learners and Hearers respectively (89). Philosophers of I.'s time also distinguished committed followers (*zelotai*) from those who came to listen (*akroatai*): Fowden 39. Tradition on the lifestyle of the Hearers is not consistent, and probably reveals adaptations and compromises. At 29-30, if the text is right, the Hearers live with their families (unlike the coenobite Learners) but their property is in common; at 81 Pythagorisers keep their private property. 89 end appears to mean (cf. 72) that "civil servants" (*politikoi*) "managers" and "legislators" are alternative names for the Pythagoreans who administer the community's affairs, but at 129 and 150 *politikoi* are engaged in ordinary civic life. Civic life required participation in civic cult, especially sacrifice: this may explain why, at 150, hearers and civil servants may make animal sacrifices, and why Pythagorean meals may include sacrificial meat (98, 109; 85 offers an argument that human souls do not migrate into those animals it is lawful to sacrifice, compare Empedokles fr.136-7, translated KRS 319). See further Détienné GA ch.2. I. himself thought human souls, being rational, did not migrate into non-rational animals (Wallis 120). The C5 AD philosopher Proclus, a strict vegetarian, also tasted meat at public sacrifices (Marinus, *Life of Proclus* 12 and 19).

(82) The Hearers' study of philosophy consists of maxims without demonstration or argument: "do this", and the other pronouncements of Pythagoras. They try to preserve these as divine teachings; they make no claim to speak for themselves, nor do they think it right to speak, but they hold those who have acquired the most axioms to be the best equipped for wisdom.

These maxims are of three kinds, the "what is?", the "what is the most?" and the "what is to be done or not done?". The "what is?" are like this: "What is 'the islands of the blest'? The sun and moon." "What is the oracle at Delphi? The tetract; it is also the harmony in which the Sirens sang." The "what is the most?" are like this: "What is the most just? Sacrifice." "What is the wisest? Number, and the next is that which gives things their names." "What is wisest among human skills? Medicine." "What is finest? Harmony." "What is strongest? Judgement." "What is best? Happiness." "What is truest? That people are wicked."

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82-6 "Maxims" translates *acousmata* ("things heard"), which are also *symbola* (103-5): that is, cryptic statements which hide the truth from the uninitiated (cf. 226-7) and serve as tokens of recognition for initiates. I. wrote a (lost) treatise on symbols (Larsen p.61 and 88-9), perhaps concerned with their use in theurgy (as in *On the Mysteries* 1.21). See further Philip ch.9, Burkert LS II.4; other interpretations of *symbola* in Plutarch, *Moralia* 727-8, and in I. *Protrepticus* ch.21.

82 The "islands of the blest" were traditionally the home of good people, or heroes, after death; so also were the sun and moon, see further D tienne *Daimon* 140-67. The "tetract" is the number-series 1, 2, 3, 4 arranged as a triangle of dots. Speusippos (successor of Plato as head of the Academy) said Pythagoreans equated 1 with point, 2 with line, 3 with plane and 4 with solid: the progression of numbers symbolised, or generated, the physical world. See Philip ch.6, especially 97-8 note 5. The first four numbers add up to the "perfect number" 10, and include the harmonic ratios of fourth, fifth and octave (see 115-21n) which govern the music of the spheres (see 64-7n) and the song of the Sirens, identified by Plato *Republic* 616b-617e with the music of the spheres (KRS 233): each Siren sang one of the eight notes of the octave. (See further Lamberton 230-2.) The Delphic oracle reveals all truth, and the tetract is the fundamental truth of the universe. For the giver of names see 56-7n.



They say that Pythagoras praised the poet Hippodamas of Salamis for his lines

Whence do you come, O gods, how came you to be as you are?

Whence do you come, O people, how came you to be so wicked?

(83) These, then, are examples of that kind of maxim; each is a "what is the most?" This is the same as what is called the wisdom of the seven sages, for they did not ask "What is the good?" but "What is the most good?", not "What is the difficult?" but "What is the most difficult?" (the answer is "to know yourself"), not "What is the easy?" but "What is the easiest?" (the answer is "to follow habit"). So these maxims are probably derived from that kind of wisdom, since the seven sages lived before Pythagoras.

Maxims about "what is to be done or not done?" are like this: "One must have children" (so as to leave successors to worship the gods). "One must put the right shoe on first." "One must not walk on public roads, take holy water or use the baths" (because it is not certain, in all these circumstances, that those sharing with us are pure). (84) Other examples are "Do not help to unload a burden" (because it is wrong to encourage lack of effort) "but help to load it up". "Do not seek to have children by a rich woman." "Do not speak without a light." "Pour a libation to the gods over the handle of the cup, as an omen, and so that no-one drinks from the same place." "Do not wear a seal-ring with the image of a god, lest it be defiled: it is a cult-image, which should be set up in the house." "A man must not persecute his wife, for she is a suppliant: that is also why we lead the bride from the hearth, taking her by the right hand." "Do not sacrifice a white cock, for he is a suppliant, sacred to Men: that is also why he tells the time." (85) "Never give advice which is not in the best interest of the one who seeks it: advice is holy." "Work is good, pleasure of all kinds is bad: we come looking for punishment and must have it." "One should make sacrifice, and

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83 The prohibition on public baths may have helped to inspire the scruffy Pythagoreans of C4 comedy (quotations in DL 8.36-8).

84 *Men* is Greek for month, and is the name of a Babylonian deity.

go to holy places, barefoot." "One should not leave one's path to go to a temple, for we must not make the god an incidental task." "It is good to die, if you stand your ground with wounds in front: if not, not." "The souls of humans may enter any living creature except those it is lawful to sacrifice. So we must eat only sacrificial animals, those that are fit to eat, not any other living creature."

Such, then, are these maxims: the most extensive are concerned with the proper sacrifices on all occasions, the other honours to the gods, transmigration from this place and the right method of burial.

(86) Some maxims have to have an additional saying, as that one should have children in order to leave a replacement to worship the gods, but some have no explanation added. Some of the explanations seem to have been there from the beginning, others are later additions, as in "Do not break bread: it is not favourable for the judgement in Hades". Attempts to explain such things are not Pythagorean, but were made by ingenious outsiders trying to give a plausible reason. In this instance, to explain why one should not break bread, some say one should not separate that which unites (for in the old days friends shared one loaf, as barbarians do), others that one should not make a bad omen by breaking or crumbling at the outset.

But all these precepts about what to do or not to do aim at the divine. That is the principle: all of life is so ordered as to follow the god, and that is the rationale of this philosophy. (87) People behave absurdly when they seek the good anywhere but from the gods: it is like living in a country with a monarchy, cultivating some citizen who holds a lesser office and ignoring the one who rules all. That, the Pythagoreans think, is what people do. Since God exists and is lord of all, obviously we must ask our lord for what is good. For everyone gives good things to those they love and delight in, and the opposite to those for whom they feel the opposite.

Such, then, is the wisdom of these Pythagoreans.

One Hippomedon of Asine, a Pythagorean, one of the Hearers, said that Pythagoras had in fact given explanations and proofs of all the axioms, but because the axioms were passed on by many people, each lazier than the one before, the explanations had been lost and the hard sayings remained. But those Pythagoreans concerned with the teachings (the Learners) accept that those others (the Hearers) are Pythagoreans, but claim that they themselves are more so and what they say is true. And this, they say, is the reason for the disparity.

(88) Pythagoras came from Samos, in Ionia, when Polykrates was tyrant and Italy at its peak of prosperity, and the leading men in the cities became his associates. But the older men were involved in politics and had little leisure, so he gave them the bare instructions: it was hard to find time for the teachings and proofs, and he thought they would benefit as much from knowing what to do even without the reason for it, just as a doctor's patients get better although they have not been told the reasons for his instructions. But with the young men, who could work hard at their studies, he went into the proofs and discussed the teachings. So they (the Learners) derive from this group, the others (the Hearers) from the first group. As for Hippasos, he was indeed a Pythagorean, but because he was first to make public the sphere constructed from twelve pentagons he was lost at sea for his impiety: he got the reputation of having discovered it, but it all came from "that man" — that is what they call Pythagoras: they do not use his name.

(89) The Pythagoreans say this is how geometry was made public. One of the Pythagoreans lost all his property, and because of this misfortune he was allowed to make a living from geometry. Pythagoras called geometry "enquiry".

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87 Hippomedon's town is a conjecture: see Deubner.

88 The "sphere constructed from 12 pentagons" is the dodecahedron. You can make a sphere (Greek *sphairos*, ball) by constructing a dodecahedron in soft fabric and stuffing it: hence in Plato, *Timaeus* 55c, the dodecahedron is "the sphere of the all" (see 15ln). Dodecahedrons were also, it seems, cult-images, and Burkert LS 460 suggests the impiety was a public mathematical analysis.

89 Perhaps a misreading of Herakleitos fr.129 (DL 8.6) which says Π. practised enquiry (Burkert LS 408-9); cf. 199 for the publication of geometry.

This, then, is the information we have on the difference of subject-matter and the two groups of men who heard Pythagoras. Those inside and outside the veil, those who hear and see and those who hear without seeing, and those divided into "inside" and "outside" are to be equated with the two groups I have described. The "civil servants", "managers" and "legislators" should also be equated.

19 The many ways of useful education that Pythagoras discovered; his encounter with Abaris, and how he brought him to the highest wisdom by yet another way.

(90) It is worth knowing how many ways of education Pythagoras discovered, always giving the share of wisdom appropriate to each person's nature and capacity. Here is a striking example. When Abaris the Scythian came from the Hyperboreans, he had no experience of Greek education, was not an initiate, and was advanced in years. Pythagoras did not lead him through complex studies, but instead of the five-year silence, and the long period of hearing and the other trials, he made him capable at once of hearing his own declared beliefs, and expounded to him, as briefly as possible, the treatise *On Nature* and another *On the Gods*.

(91) Now Abaris had come from the Hyperboreans, and was a priest of their Apollo: an old man, very wise in sacred matters. He was returning from Greece to his own country, to deposit the

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90 Here two treatises are ascribed to P. Others are listed by DL 8.6-8, who notes that some say P. wrote nothing. Porphyry (*Life of P.* 57) and many modern scholars agree. I.252-3, a parallel passage with Porphyry, does not say this, but 146, 158 and 198-9 acknowledge doubts about authorship. At 146 *On The Gods* is identified with the *Hieros Logos*, by P. or his son Telauges, which is taken to mean "Sacred Book":but a *hieros logos*, the story which explains a cult or ritual, need not be written. Delatte *Litt* part I tries to reconstruct a verse Hieros Logos with very early elements, surviving within the "Golden Verses" later ascribed to P. There is a forgery called *Hieros Logos* at 259. Thesleff 1965 155-86 collects and discusses all fragments ascribed to P.

91-3 The Hyperboreans ("beyond the north wind") were a legendary race

gold collected for the god in the temple in the land of the Hyperboreans. On his journey he passed through Italy, saw Pythagoras and thought him very like the god whose priest he was. He was convinced, by most sacred tokens which he saw in Pythagoras and which he had, as a priest, foreseen, that this was no other: not a human being resembling the god, but really Apollo. He returned to Pythagoras an arrow, which he had brought when he left the temple as a help against difficulties he might meet on his lengthy wanderings. Riding on the arrow, he crossed impassable places — rivers, marshes, swamps, mountains and the like; and by speaking to it, so the story goes, he could achieve purifications and drive away plagues and tempest from the cities which asked his help.

(92) In Lakedaimon, at least, there was no plague after the purification he carried out, thought the land had often before been afflicted because its situation is so unhealthy: Mount Taygetos looms above and the heat is stifling. Knossos in Crete was the same, and there are other testimonies to the power of Abaris. When Pythagoras received the arrow, he did not think it strange, or ask why Abaris gave it to him, but — like one who is truly a god — privately took Abaris aside and showed him his golden thigh, as a token that he was not deceived. He also told him exactly what was deposited in the temple, giving him sufficient proof that he had not guessed wrong, and added that he had come for the welfare and benefit of humanity. For that reason he was in human form, so that people should not think the presence of a superior being strange and disturbing, and run away from his teaching. He told Abaris to stay there and help in the amendment of those who came, and to share the gold he had collected with those companions who had been led by reason to confirm in action the precept "friends have all in common". (93) Abaris remained, and, as I said, Pythagoras taught him natural

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distinguished, like their southern counterparts the Ethiopians, for piety: the gods acknowledged this by feasting with them, and when Apollo was not at Delphi this was one reason for his absence. For Abaris (140-1, 147, 215-9) see J.D.P.Bolton, *Aristeas Of Proconnesus* (1962) esp. 157-8. Apollo is an archer, hence the arrow; Abaris's travels may be an image

science and theology in summary form. Instead of divination by inspection of sacrifices he taught him divination by numbers, which he thought purer, more divine, and more closely connected with the heavenly numbers of the gods. He also taught Abaris other practices suited to him.

But, to return to the reason for this story, Pythagoras sought to instruct people in different ways, according to the nature and capacity of each one. Not all these ways have been handed down, and it would be difficult to go through all the ways that are remembered. (94) So let us go through a few, the best known examples of Pythagorean training, and the records of the standard practices of those men.

20 The special practices of Pythagorean philosophy; how he handed them down and how he exercised each new generation embarking on philosophy.

He first considered, in testing people, whether they could "hold their peace" (that was his expression), and whether they could learn all they heard and keep it safe and secret; then whether they were modest. He showed more concern for silence than for speech. He considered everything else too, lest they should be volatile or uncontrolled in giving way to passions and desires, and he was particularly interested in how they dealt with anger and desire, whether they were ambitious for victory or honour, and whether they were quarrelsome or friendly. If, after careful scrutiny, he thought they had good characters, he looked at their ability to learn and their memory: could they quickly and clearly follow what was said, did they show contentment and self-discipline in their studies? (95) He also considered their natural tendency to gentleness (he called it "arrangement"), for he thought a savage temper was hostile to a

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for the flight of the soul apart from the body (Bolton ch.7). On the theory that both Abaris and P. were shamans, see Philip 159-62. For P. as theophany of Apollo see on 5-8. The golden thigh is discussed by Burkert LS 159-60: probably the best explanation is that visitors to the underworld are wounded or branded in the thigh, but P. can make the journey safely. On divination see 68-70n.

programme such as his, bringing in its train lack of modesty, shamelessness, lack of control, untimely action, difficulty in learning, rejection of authority, dishonour, and their consequences; from mildness and gentleness come the opposite. So he investigated all this in his testing, and trained his disciples to achieve these things, and selected those suited to the benefits of his wisdom and tried to lead them on to knowledge in this way. But if he saw that someone was not suited, he expelled him as a stranger and an alien.

21 The daily regime which Pythagoras established and handed on to his followers for careful observance; some precepts in accordance with the practices.

I shall go on to the regime, occupying the whole day, which Pythagoras handed on to his followers. This is what was done, in accordance with his instructions, by those who followed where he led:

(96) They took a morning walk, alone, and in places where peace and quiet were appropriate, where there were shrines or sacred groves or other delights of the heart. They thought it wrong to meet people before one's own soul is stable and one's mind adjusted, and this tranquillity, they thought, helped to settle the mind, whereas it is disturbing to get up and immediately push one's way through crowds. So all the Pythagoreans always chose the places most suited to sanctity. Only after the morning walk did they meet each other, preferably in sanctuaries, but otherwise in similar places. They used this time for teaching, study and the amendment of character.

(97) After this period of study they turned to the care of the body. Most were oiled and ran races; a smaller number wrestled in the gardens and groves, some jumped with weights or shadow boxed; they chose the exercises which best promoted physical strength. For lunch they had bread with honey or honeycomb, but they took no wine during the day. After lunch they were

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97 Oil: used by athletes to protect the skin, and make it easier to scrape off dust.

concerned with the management of the community, and also with the affairs of outsiders through the prescription of laws: they were willing to deal with all administrative questions in the afternoon. When evening came, they went for walks again, but not in private as they did in the morning: they walked in twos or threes, recalling what they had learnt and exercising themselves in their admirable practices. (98) After the walk they took a bath, then went to their mess: not more than ten people ate together. When the fellow-diners met, there were libations and offerings of incense and frankincense. Then they began dinner, so as to finish before sunset. They had wine, barley-bread and wheat bread, a side-dish, cooked and raw vegetables; meat, from sacrificial animals, was set out, but they rarely had fish or seafood — some of it, for various reasons, they thought was not good to eat. (99) After this dinner there were libations, then reading: the custom was for the youngest to read, and the eldest to decide what should be read and how. Before they left, the wine-steward poured them a libation, and when they had made it the eldest instructed them as follows: “Do not harm or destroy a cultivated plant which bears fruit, and do not harm or destroy any living creature which is not harmful to the human race. (100) Moreover, think and speak as you ought about the races of gods, spirits and heroes, and likewise about your parents and benefactors; help the law and fight lawlessness.” When this was said, each one went home. They wore clean white clothes and used clean white bedclothes: these were linen, as they did not use fleeces. They disapproved of hunting and did not use it as a form of exercise. These, then, were the instructions given to the mass of the Pythagoreans for their daily life, food and occupations.

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98 “Side-dish” translates Greek *opson*, which means whatever was available to eat with the basic bread - usually meat, but with Pythagoreans that could not be assumed.

100 Gods, spirits and heroes: see 16n. “Help the law”: Delatte *Pol* 49-50 thinks this required acting as informer, as in Plato’s *Laws*. White linen clothes were worn by those preparing for initiation, so Pythagoreans lived always in readiness (Burkert LS 190-1); cf. 153, 155.



22 Education by the Pythagorean precepts referring to life and human concerns.

(101) Another kind of education has been handed down: that given by Pythagorean precepts, including those referring to life and human concerns. I shall give here a few of the many. They ordained that conflict and quarrelling should be abolished from true friendship: from all friendship if possible, but at least from that for one's father and one's elders, and likewise for one's benefactors. If a fit of anger, or some other passion, produces a lasting conflict or quarrel with such people, it damages the existing bond of friendship. Irritation and exasperation should occur as little as possible in friendship: this will come about if both parties know how to give way and to control their tempers, but the younger, and the one who holds any of the offices mentioned, should particularly do so. Older men should give younger ones correction and advice (they call it "tuning") only with the greatest tact and circumspection, and affectionate concern should be very obvious in those giving the advice: that way it will be suitable and beneficial. (102) One should never break faith in a friendship, whether in jest or earnest: it is difficult to restore the bond to health once falsity has affected the characters of the supposed friends. One should not renounce a friendship because of misfortune, or any other life-event which cannot be prevented; the only valid reason for renouncing a friend and a friendship is great and incorrigible vice. Such, then, was their method of amendment by precepts concerning all the virtues and all aspects of life.

23 The preparation for philosophy through symbols and secret conveying of beliefs, handed down as education only to those who know, in accordance with the practice of the Egyptians and the most ancient Greek theologians.

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101 "Pythagorean precepts" (*Puthagorikai apophaseis*) was the title of the book by Aristoxenos (see on 233) which is probably the source for 101-2, 174-6, 180-3, 200-13, 230-3. Fragments are collected by F. Wehrli, *Aristoxenos* (1945, in German).

(103) But the most necessary form of teaching, for Pythagoras, was by symbols. Almost all Greeks were enthusiastic about this kind of teaching, because it is of very great antiquity; the Egyptians gave it its most subtle form and highest status. In the same way Pythagoras also valued it greatly, as may be seen by those who can perceive the meaning and unspoken content of the Pythagorean symbols, and can realise how much rightness and truth is in them once they are freed from the concealment of their riddling form, and how well their simple and straightforward transmission suits the greatness, indeed the closeness to god which surpasses human understanding, of these philosophers. (104) This style was employed by those of Pythagoras' school, especially the earliest members, Pythagoras' contemporaries, who in youth studied with him in his old age: Philolaos, Eurytos, Charondas, Zaleukos, Bryson, the elder Archytas, Aristaios, Lysis, Empedokles, Zalmoxis, Epimenides, Milon, Leukippos, Alkmaion, Hippasos, Thymarides and all their associates, a multitude of famous and outstanding men. In their conversations and discussions, their notes and records, and even in all their published work (most of which still survives today), they did not use common, vulgar, ordinary language, which could be superficially understood by anyone who heard it, in an attempt to make what they said easy to follow. Instead, they kept Pythagoras' rule of "holding your peace" about the divine mysteries, using secret devices to exclude the uninitiated and protecting their exchanges of speech and writing by the use of symbols. (105) Unless one can interpret the symbols, and understand them by careful exposition, what they say would strike the chance observer as absurd — old wives'

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104 Some of these are discussed in other notes: Philolaos 199, Eurytos 139, Charondas and Zaleukos 33, Archytas 127, Lysis 75, Empedokles 64-7, Zalmoxis 173, Epimenides 5-8, Milon 249, Hippasos 80. Leukippos is probably the mid C5 BC atomist philosopher from Elea in southern Italy (KRS XV); Alkmaion of Kroton (DL 8.83) was a medical philosopher of the early C5 BC, who also had close contacts with Pythagoreans (KRS 338-9). Thymarides recurs at 145 and 239, Aristaios and Bryson only in the list at 267. For symbols, see 82-6n.

tales, full of nonsense and idle talk. But once they are deciphered as symbols should be, and become clear and transparent instead of obscure to outsiders, they impress us like utterances of the gods or Delphic oracles, revealing an astounding intellect and having a supernatural influence on those lovers of learning who have understood them. It will be helpful to mention a few, to illustrate this method of teaching. "One should not enter a shrine, or worship at all, while on the way to somewhere else; not even on finding oneself outside the temple doors. Sacrifice and worship barefoot. Leave the highway and use the footpaths. Do not discuss Pythagorean matters without a light." This, then, is a brief sketch of teaching by symbols.

24 The foods Pythagoras did not eat, and those he forbade to his disciples; various rules on this applying to the lives of individuals, and the reasons for them.

(106) A well-ordered diet makes a great contribution to the best education, so let us consider his rules about this. He banned all foods which are windy and cause disturbance, and recommended and advised the use of those which settle and sustain the state of the body: that is why he thought even millet a suitable food. He also banned everything unacceptable to the gods, because it leads us away from growing like the gods. But, for a different reason, he insisted on abstinence from what is considered holy, because such things deserve honour and are not for common human use. He recommended precautions against foods which impede divination or the purity and holiness of the spirit or the maintenance of temperance and virtue. (107) He

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106-9 These and other ancient arguments for vegetarianism are discussed by D.Dombrowski, *The Philosophy Of Vegetarianism* (1984). Mallow (109): for "sympathy" see 68-70n; I. *Protrepticus* 21.38 (p.125 Pistelli) says it is heliotropic. It is also a food-plant which grows without cultivation - a gift of the gods - and was used in recipes for suppressing hunger and thirst: D  tienne GA 47; recipes in Porphyry, *Life* 34. *Protrepticus* 21.33 (p.124 P) says the erythrin fish is named from *erythros*, "red", and connotes the blush of conscious ignorance. Beans: see 61n.

also rejected anything which obstructs lucidity, making turbid the purity of the soul especially as regards images seen in sleep. These were his general rules on food, but privately, for those philosophers who had reached the most sublime heights of knowledge, he ruled out once for all those foods which are unnecessary and unjust, telling them never to eat any living creature, drink wine, sacrifice living things to the gods or hurt them in any way: they were to be treated with scrupulous justice. (108) That is how he lived himself, abstaining from animal food and worshipping at bloodless altars, and in his eagerness that others should not destroy the creatures which share our nature, taming fierce animals and educating them by words and actions, never punishing and hurting them. He also instructed the "legislators" among the civil servants to abstain from living creatures, because, if they wished to act with perfect justice, they must do no wrong to fellow-creatures. How could they persuade others to act justly if they themselves were caught in acts of greed? Animals are akin to us, sharing life and basic constituents and composition, linked in a kind of brotherhood. (109) Other students, whose life was not entirely pure and holy and philosophic, were allowed to eat some animal food, though even they had fixed periods of abstinence. He also forbade them to eat the heart or the brain, and told all Pythagoreans to abstain from these, for these are the governing organs and, as it were, the seats and abodes of thought and life: their nature is that of the divine reason and he declared them sacred. They were not allowed to eat mallow either, because it is the first sign of the sympathy between heavenly and earthly beings, or the blacktail fish, because it belongs to the gods of the underworld, or the erythrinos fish for other such reasons. "Abstain from beans" has many reasons, sacred, natural and concerned with the soul. He made other regulations similar to these, aiming to lead people on the path to virtue by starting with their diet.

25 How he educated people through music and songs, at special times, and when they were troubled by passions; how he purified

them from diseases of body and soul by music, and how he performed the purifications.

(110) He held that music too made a great contribution to health, if properly used: he took this form of purification very seriously, calling it "healing by music". In the spring he engaged in singing like this: a lyre-player was seated in the centre, and those who were good at singing sat round him in a circle and sang, to his accompaniment, paeans, which they thought raised their spirits and established inner harmony and rhythm. They also, at other times, used music as a kind of medicine. (111) There were songs designed for afflictions of the soul, to counter depression and anguish of mind (some of Pythagoras' most helpful inventions); others to deal with anger and bursts of indignation and every disturbance of that kind of soul; and yet another kind of music devised to counter desires. They also used dancing. As a musical instrument, they used the lyre, because Pythagoras thought the aulos had an assertive tone, suited to large gatherings but not to cultivated people. They also used selected passages of Homer and Hesiod to improve the soul.

(112) It is told of Pythagoras that once, with a solemn tune played on an aulos, he calmed the frenzy of a lad from Tauromenion who was roaring drunk and had gone at night to serenade his girlfriend by his rival's door. He was about to set it on fire, for the Phrygian flute-music had lit the spark and fanned it, but Pythagoras soon put a stop to that. (He was out early, engaged in astronomy.) He told the flute-player to change to a solemn tune, which promptly calmed the young man down, and Pythagoras sent him peacefully home — though a little earlier he had not only rejected Pythagoras' advice but would not endure it, telling him furiously to go to hell just for being there. (113) Empedokles did something similar. A young man had already

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111-2 Phrygian flute-music: both the instrument (the *aulos*, conventionally called a double-flute but sounding more like an oboe) and the musical mode were associated with the ecstatic cults which altered mental states. I. discusses the effect in *On The Mysteries* 3.9; see further Sheppard p. 113-5. Use of Homer and Hesiod: cf. 164, and 9n.

drawn his sword on Empedokles' host Anchitos, who had been a judge at the public trial of the young man's father and condemned him to death. The young man was in such a turmoil and indignation that he had rushed to stab the man who had condemned his father as if Anchitos had actually murdered him. Empedokles, as he sat, tuned his lyre, played a soothing, calming melody, and struck up Homer's famous "soother of grief and wrath, oblivion of all evils", and saved his host Anchitos from death, and the young man from committing murder. (114) This youth is reported to have become, after this, Empedokles' best pupil.

The entire school of Pythagoras practised what was called "arrangement" or "composition" or "treatment", converting states of soul to their opposite by the beneficial use of appropriate songs. When they went to bed they used particular songs and special tunes to clear their minds of the day's troubles and preoccupations, and to make their sleep calm and visited by few dreams, and those pleasant ones. When they got up they used different songs to get rid of sloth and torpor; sometimes they used tunes without words. They also healed some afflictions and diseases by, quite literally, singing over them: that, in all probability, is how the word "incantation" came into general use.

This, then, was Pythagoras' most beneficial method of correcting human character and lifestyle by music. (115) And since our exposition of his educational wisdom has reached this point, it will be advisable to deal next with a related subject: his invention of the science and principles of harmony. Let us go back a little.

26 How Pythagoras discovered the principles of harmony, and handed that science on to his followers.

He was once engaged in intense thought about whether he could find some precise scientific instrument to assist the sense

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113 Odyssey 4.221, describing an Egyptian drug, a gift to Helen.

115-21 An untypically detailed account of music theory, taken from Nicomachos, *Encheiridion* 6-7 (a translation will appear in Andrew

of hearing, as compass and ruler and the measurement of angles assist the sight and scales and weights and measures assist touch. Providentially, he walked passed a smithy, and heard the hammers beating out the iron on the anvil. They gave out a melody of sounds, harmonious except for one pair. He recognised in them the consonance of octave, fifth and fourth, and saw that what lay between the fourth and fifth was in itself discordant, but was essential to fill out the greater of the intervals.(116) Rejoicing in the thought that the gods were helping on his project, he ran into the smithy, and discovered by detailed experiments that the difference of sound was in relation to the weight of the hammers, not the force used by those hammering, the shape of the hammer heads, or any change in the iron as it was beaten out. So he carefully selected weights precisely equivalent to the weight of the hammers, and went home. From a single rod, fixed into the walls across a corner (in case rods with peculiar properties made, or were even thought to make, a difference), he suspended four strings, of the same material, length and thickness, evenly twisted. To the end of each string he attached one of the weights, ensuring that the length of the strings was exactly equal. (117) Then he struck the strings two at a time, and found that the different pairs gave exactly the concords already mentioned. The string stretched by the biggest weight, together with that stretched by the smallest, gave an octave: the biggest weight weighed twelve units and the smallest six. So the octave, as the weights showed, was a ratio of two to one. The biggest weight, together with the second smallest which weighed eight units, gave a fifth: thus he showed that the fifth is

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Barker, *Greek Musical Writings* II ch.10, forthcoming). Musicology was essential to the Pythagoreans because they argued (cf.82n) that the same fundamental ratios, discovered by P., governed music and the universe. It was also important as a route from the standard educational system to the Pythagorean understanding of truth. I's Pythagorean sequence included a volume on music (120; O'Meara 86-7). His exposition here is confusing, because it moves between the relative sizes of the weights and the number of units they weighed, and also because it has to use, for what we express as ratios, the Greek words for "twice as much" (two to one), "half as much again" (three to two) and

a ratio of three to two, like the weights. The biggest weight together with the second biggest, which was heavier than the remaining weights and weighed nine units, gave a fourth, its ratio also corresponding to that of the weights. So he realised at once that the fourth is a ratio of four to three, whereas the ratio of the second heaviest to the lightest was three to two (for that is the relationship of nine to six). (118) Similarly, the second smallest (weighing eight units) was in the ratio of four to three with that weighing six units, and in a ratio of two to three with that weighing twelve units. What lies between fifth and fourth (that is, the amount by which the fifth is greater than the fourth) was thus established as a ratio of nine to eight. It was also established that an octave can be made up in one of two ways: as a conjunction of fifth and fourth (since the ratio of two to one is a conjunction of three to two and four to three, as in  $12 : 8 : 6$ ) or the other way round, as a conjunction of fourth and fifth (since the ratio of two to one is a conjunction of four to three and three to two, as in  $12 : 9 : 6$ ).

Having worn out hand and hearing by the use of the suspended weights, and established through them the ratio of the positions, he ingeniously replaced the point at which all the strings were attached — the rod across the corner — with the rod at the base of the instrument, which he named the “string-stretcher”; and he replaced the pull of the different weights with the corresponding tightening of the pegs at the top. (119) Taking this as a basis, as a standard which could not mislead, he extended his experiments to different kinds of instrument, testing bowls, reed pipes, pan-pipes, monochords, trigona and

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“one-third as much again” (four to three). The ratios are correct, although the experiment (as rival analysts knew in antiquity) does not work. Pieces of metal do not vibrate in direct proportion to their weight, and difference of pitch is not in direct proportion to difference of tension. The ratios P. discovered are most easily seen in the length of a string, or of the column of air in a wind-instrument, in relation to the sound produced: for instance, a string stopped half-way along its length produces a sound an octave higher than the same string unstopped. The Greek for “octave” is *dia pason*, “through all the [strings]” of an eight-



others. In all he found the understanding reached through number to be harmonious and unchanged.

He named "furthest" the note which was associated with six, "middle" that which was associated with eight (and in the ratio of four to three with the first), "next to middle" that associated with nine, which was one tone higher than the "middle" and in the ratio of nine to eight with it, and "nearest" that associated with twelve. He filled up the gaps between, in the diatonic scale, with notes in the proper ratios. Thus he made the octachord, or eight-string sequence, subservient to concordant numbers: the ratios of two to one, three to two and four to three, and the difference between the last two, nine to eight. (120) And thus he discovered the sequence from lowest to highest note which proceeds by a kind of natural necessity in the diatonic scale. He also articulated the chromatic and enharmonic scales from the diatonic, as it will be possible to show when we come to discuss music. The diatonic scale has as its stages, in a natural progression, semitone, tone, tone, making up the interval of a fourth: a group of two tones and the so-called "half-tone". Then, with the addition of another tone, the "intercalated" tone, the interval of a fifth is formed: a group of three tones and a half-tone. In succession to this comes a semitone and a tone and a tone, another interval of a fourth (that is, another ratio of four to three). In the older seven-note sequence (the heptachord), all

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stringed instrument (octachord). Musical analysis usually began with the tetrachord, a group of four notes; different combinations of intervals making up the tetrachord gave different scales, the most usual being the diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic. Tones, semitones and scales were not the same as the modern versions. A octachord could be analysed as a tetrachord and a pentachord in conjunction, either way round (Greek *synaphe*) or as two tetrachords with a tone between them (Greek *diazeuxis*). I. argues that the Pythagorean ratios fit either analysis. They do not fit the enharmonic scales, and Archytas added more ratios to make the analysis possible. For further information on music theory and practice see Andrew Barker, *Greek Musical Writings I* (1984): I am much indebted to him. The *trigonon* (119) was a triangular-framed harp: its strings differed in length, not in thickness or tension (Barker o.c. 197 n.47).

notes which were four apart, from the lowest up, made the interval of a fourth together, and the semitone moved from the first to the middle to the third place in the group of four notes (tetrachord) being played. (121) In the Pythagorean octachord, it makes no difference whether there is a conjunction of a tetrachord and a pentachord, or a disjunction of two tetrachords separated by a tone: the sequence, from the lowest note up, is such that all notes five apart make the interval of a fifth together, and the semitone occupies four places in succession: first, second, third, fourth.

This, then, is how he discovered the theory of music, systematised it and handed it on to his disciples for every good purpose.

27 The civic and communal benefits he and his followers gave humanity, by word and deed, constitutions and legislation, and other admirable practices.

(122) Many political activities of his associates have also won praise. They say the Krotoniates were once seized with a passion for expensive funeral processions and burials. One of the Pythagoreans told the people that he had heard Pythagoras speak about the gods, saying that the Olympians considered the disposition of the sacrificers, not the amount of the sacrifice, but the gods of the underworld were the reverse: having fewer possessions, they were pleased by dirges and laments, continual libations at the tomb, grave-offerings and expensive sacrifices. (123) Hades is called Pluto (the Rich One) because he likes acquiring things. Those who pay him simple honours he leaves in

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122-6 These stories leave unclear the exact status of Pythagoreans in the government of the South Italian cities (129). Many modern scholars envisage a *hetaireia*, a group of "companions" who are personal and political allies, and who are seen by outsiders as a faction within the governing class or a conspiracy against it (254, 259, 260): Minar ch.2; on *hetaireia* as a concept see Barry S. Strauss, *Athens After The Peloponnesian War: Class, Faction And Policy* (1986) ch.1. At the time of the revolt against the Pythagoreans (see on 248-64) the "friends of Kylon"

the upper world for a long time, but he is for ever dragging down one of those inclined to unrestrained mourning, so as to get the honours which are paid him at tombs. This advice caused his audience to think that they could ensure their own safety by moderation in misfortune, whereas lavish expenditure would make them all die before their time.

(124) Another Pythagorean was made arbitrator in a dispute where there were no witnesses. He took each of the litigants in turn for a walk along the road, stopped by a grave and remarked that the man lying there had been exceptionally moral. One of the litigants called down blessings on the dead man; the other said "Much good it did him." He thought poorly of this, and inclined to believe the one who praised virtue.

Another, in a major arbitration, persuaded one of the parties to offer four talents, and the other to accept two. Then he decided for a payment of three talents, and each felt as if he had been given a talent.

Two men, with malicious intent, had deposited a cloak with one of the market-women, and told her not to give it to either unless both were present. Then they cheated: one of them took the cloak, and claimed that the other, who was nearby, had agreed. Then the second man, who had not approached her, laid information and told the magistrates the original agreement. The Pythagorean who took the case said the woman would keep the agreement — if both men were present.

(125) Two others appeared to be firm friends, but fell victim to unvoiced suspicion when a man seeking favour with one told

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form a typical *hetaireia*, linked by kinship and (temporary) common purpose. The Pythagoreans, said to number over 300 (254) have a much stronger bond (230-9; 127-8 for international links): shared lifestyle, common cult of the Muses, commitment of property, tokens of recognition, possibility of expulsion. Many scholars are reminded of the Freemasons (though Pythagoreans, unlike Masons, must have been recognisable). I., like other philosophers of the later Roman empire, was interested in political philosophy only in terms of social harmony (cf. CH 213, 274): debates on forms of government had no immediate relevance, and the active life was inferior to that of *theoria* (see 58-9n) and was undertaken only as a duty.

him his wife had been seduced by the other. It so happened that a Pythagorean went into the smithy, where the man who thought he had been wronged was showing the smith a blunt knife and reproaching him for not putting a keener edge on it. The Pythagorean suspected that he was planning to attack the man who had been slandered, and said "That knife has a keener edge than anything — except slander". This made the man stop and reflect, and refrain from a hasty crime against his friend, whom he had already summoned, and who was at his house.

(126) In the shrine of Asklepios, a foreigner dropped a belt containing gold. Custom forbade picking up anything which had fallen to the ground. The foreigner complained: a Pythagorean told him to take out the gold, which had not fallen on the ground, but leave the belt, which had.

This is said to have happened in Kroton (though ignorant people set it in other places): there was a festival, and some cranes flew over the theatre. One of the visitors who had come by sea remarked to the man sitting next to him, "See the witnesses?" A Pythagorean heard, and took them to the office of the Thousand, suspecting — as indeed they found by questioning the slaves — that the cranes had flown over the ship and seen some people thrown overboard.

Two others, it seems, fell out: they were recent adherents of Pythagoras. The younger came first to make it up, saying they should not take the problem to anyone else, but themselves forget their anger. The other said he was delighted with what he had heard, except that he was ashamed because he had not, as the elder, made the first approach.

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127 For Italian Pythagoreans see 152n. The story of Phintias (also known as Pythias) and Damon is told at 234-6, that of Kleinias and Proros at 239. Archytas was seven times general of Taras (Tarentum) in southern Italy in the 360s, DL 8.79. He campaigned against South Italian peoples (cf. 197) and defended Taras against rival Greek cities. Plato stayed with him, and the "Seventh Letter", which some scholars think is by Plato, shows Plato mediating between Archytas and Dionysius II of Syracuse (see 189n). Archytas is a favourite candidate for pseudepigrapha (collected in Thesleff 1965.2-48).

(127) There are also stories about Phintias and Damon, Plato and Archytas, Kleinias and Proros; another is that Euboulos of Messene, sailing home, was captured by Etruscans and taken to Etruria. Nausithoos the Etruscan was a Pythagorean and recognised him as a follower of Pythagoras: he got rid of the pirates and took Euboulos, in perfect safety, to Messene.

(128) The Carthaginians planned to maroon over five thousand men, who were serving in their army, on a desert island. Miltiades of Carthage saw among them Posides of Argos: both were Pythagoreans. He went up to him and, without telling him what was to happen, advised him to flee to his own country as soon as possible. A ship came past: he got Posides on board, paid his fare and saved him from danger.

In short, if anyone were to tell all the stories of how Pythagoreans behaved to one another, it would take too long for the scale and the occasion of this book. (129) So, instead, I shall move on to those Pythagoreans who engaged in politics or held office. They watched over the laws and administered some Italian cities, giving excellent advice on what they undertook, but having no share in the public revenues. There were many slanders about them, but Pythagorean virtue and the cities' own preference prevailed for a time, so that they still wanted them to administer civic affairs. At that time, it seems, the best constitutions were to be found in Italy and Sicily. (130) Charondas of Katana, who has the reputation of being one of the best legislators, was a Pythagorean; Zaleukos and Timares of Lokroi, renowned as legislators, were Pythagoreans; and Phytios, Theokles, Helikaon and Aristokrates, who drafted the Rhegian constitutions (both the "gymnasiarchic" and the Theoklean), are said to have been Pythagoreans. They excelled in the practices and customs followed by the cities of those regions at that time.

They say Pythagoras also invented the whole system of

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130 Legislators: see Dunbabin (33n) 68-75; Delatte *Pol II* ch.6. Rational and irrational impulses of the soul: see Long 171-5.

political education, when he said that none of the things in existence is pure. Earth partakes of fire, fire of water, air of both and both of air; similarly, good partakes of bad, just of unjust, and so on. (On the same principle, reason has impulses in both directions: there are two movements both of body and of soul, one irrational and one purposive.) He constructed, as it were, three lines, representing forms of government, and connected them at the ends to make a right-angled triangle: one side has the nature of the *epitritos*, the hypotenuse measures five, and the third is in the middle of the other two. (131) If we calculate the angles at which the lines meet, and the squares on each side, we have an excellent model of a constitution. Plato appropriated this idea, when he expressly mentioned, in the *Republic*, the first two numbers in the ratio of four to three which join with the fifth to make the two harmonies. Pythagoras, they say, also trained people in moderation and in finding the mean, and in how to make every

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130-1 A confusing passage: cf. 179 below. The figure is a scalene right-angled triangle; the first instance of this in the number-series is the famous 3, 4, 5 triangle. The problem is that I. does not simply name these numbers. It would be easiest if the side "having the nature of the *epitritos*", that is the ratio four to three, measured three units. The second side is described as *pente toiauta dunamene: dunamene*, which usually means "the square root", can have the meaning "hypotenuse" (see LSJ), and the phrase could mean "the hypotenuse [measuring] five such [units]". Then the third side, between the other two, would measure four units. Unfortunately, the number which "has the nature of the *epitritos*" is usually four (Delatte *Pol* 60-3, who offers an emended version of the second side but ignores the third). The interpretation is easier. By "P's theorem", the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides (see Burkert *LS* 427-30 for a possible method of calculation). So numbers which at first sight are unequal (or incommensurable) are connected in harmonious relationships. If the numbers are put together at a right angle, itself an image of rightness and equality, it is possible to achieve "proportional" or "geometric" equality: the squares are an image of political power proportionate to the original inequality of the lines. Democrats preferred "arithmetical" equality: one man, one vote. Anti-democrats said this was simply to declare that inequalities are equal (Aristotle, *Politics* 3.9; Plato, *Republic* 558c). The Plato reference is *Republic* 546b: see J. Adam, *The Republic of Plato* II (1902) 264-312.

life happy with some principal good, and generally found out how to choose what is good for us and the appropriate actions.

(132) It is said that the Krotoniates dismissed their concubines, and had no further connection with any women other than their lawful wives. Deino was the wife of Brontinos, a Pythagorean, a woman of wise and exceptional soul. She made the famous and admirable remark (which some attribute to Theano) that a woman who has slept with her own husband should sacrifice that same day. The women of Kroton came to her and asked her to persuade Pythagoras to speak to their husbands about self-restraint in relation to them. This is in fact what happened: she promised, Pythagoras spoke, and the Krotoniates were persuaded to abandon the general laxity.

(133) Ambassadors came from Sybaris to Kroton to request the return of some exiles. Pythagoras saw that one of them had murdered one of his friends, and gave him no answer. The man asked again, wanting to share his conversation, but he said there was no response for people like that. This made some people think that Pythagoras was Apollo. Let us then take all these stories, and what we said a little earlier about the overthrow of tyrants and the freeing of the cities in Italy and Sicily and many more, as indications of what Pythagoras contributed to civic good.

28 His divine and awe-inspiring actions; matters concerning piety, which bring great benefit to human beings through the goodwill of the gods, and which reached the human race through Pythagoras.

(134) From now on let us no longer deal with everything together, but divide his actions into examples of separate virtues, and celebrate these. Let us begin, as the custom is, with the

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132 cp.55.

133 "No response": the Greek verb, *themisteuein*, is used of the pronouncements of an oracle. cf.177.

134-240 The sections organised by Virtue (piety 134-56, wisdom 157-66, justice 167-86, self-control 187-212, courage 214-28, friendship 229-40) recycle material I. has already used, but with additions.

gods, and try to show ourselves and celebrate his holiness and its astonishing effects. One matter I have already mentioned may stand as proof: he knew his own soul and from where it had come to his body, and his previous lives, and gave clear evidence of this. And here is another proof: he was once crossing the river Nessos, with several companions, and spoke to it; the river replied in a deep, penetrating voice, audible to all, "Greetings, Pythagoras". And on one and the same day he was in Metapontion in Italy and Tauromenion in Sicily, talking publicly with his followers in each place. Almost everyone is sure of this, though there are many miles of land and sea between, which cannot be crossed even in very many days.

(135) It is widely known that he showed his golden thigh to Abaris the Hyperborean, who had guessed that he was Apollo of the Hyperboreans whose priest Abaris was, to confirm that Abaris was right and not deceived. There are thousands of other comparable, and consistent, stories about him, even more godlike and astonishing than these: infallible predictions of earthquakes, the speedy averting of epidemics, the immediate lulling of violent gales and hailstorms and the stilling of waves in rivers and the sea so that his companions had an easy crossing. Empedokles of Akragas, Epimenides of Crete and Abaris the Hyperborean shared in these powers, and often themselves achieved the like.

(136) Their works are there to be seen; moreover, Empedokles was known as Wind-Warder, Epimenides as Purifier, and Abaris as Walker on Air because he crossed rivers and seas and trackless land on the arrow given him by Hyperborean Apollo, and that, in a sense, is walking on air. Some people think Pythagoras too had the same experience when he talked on the same day to his followers at Metapontion and at Tauromenion. It is also said that he predicted an earthquake from the condition of a well from which he drank, and foretold the sinking of a ship then running before a following wind.

(137) Let these stand as evidence of his piety: I want now to return to the principles of worship of the gods which were established by Pythagoras and his successors. All their decisions



about what to do or not to do aimed at being in accord with the divine. This is the principle; all of life is so ordered as to follow the god, and the rationale of this philosophy is that people behave absurdly when they seek the good anywhere but from the gods: it is like living in a monarchy, cultivating some citizen who holds a lesser office and ignoring the ruler and king of all. That, the Pythagoreans think, is what people do. Since God exists and is lord of all, obviously we must ask our lord for what is good; and since everyone gives good things to those they love and delight in, and the opposite to those for whom they feel the opposite, clearly we must do what does delight God.

(138) But it is not easy to know what that is, unless you can find out by the god listening to you, or yourself listening to the god, or through some divine technique. That is why the Pythagoreans work at divination, for that is our only interpreter of the mind of the gods. One who believes in the gods will think this a proper concern of theirs; anyone who finds either conviction silly will think both are.

Most of the prohibitions are derived from sacred rites, because the Pythagoreans think they mean something and are not inflated nonsense, but have their origin from a god. All Pythagoreans are disposed to believe the stories told (for instance) about Aristeas of Prokonnesos and Abaris the Hyperborean and other such: they believe all such things were done and themselves attempt many of them, and keep in memory the stories which are thought to be fabulous, not disbelieving anything which might lead to the divine.

(139) Eurytos is said to have told the story that a shepherd, pasturing his flock at the grave of Philolaos, said he heard someone singing: he had not disbelieved it, but asked "What was

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138 I. thought there was a "divine technique", namely theurgy, the invocation of divine powers by the ritual use of words and symbolic objects. See 68-70n, 147, and introduction n.4; esp. Shaw; for the late antique debate about theurgy see Smith part II. Aristeas, like Abaris (see refs. 91-3n), was a wonder-worker, whose soul could travel free from his body.

139 Linus: like Orpheus, the legendary author of poems. For Philolaos

the tune?". Both were Pythagoreans: Eurytos was Philolaos' pupil. And they say someone told Pythagoras that he had thought he was talking to his dead father in a dream, and asked "What does that signify?" Pythagoras replied that it did not signify anything, except that he was really talking to him. "It does not signify anything that you are now talking to me: neither does that." In such matters they think those who disbelieve are foolish, not themselves: it is not that some things are possible to the god but some impossible, as the clever people suppose, but all things are possible. This is the origin of the verses they say were composed by Linus, but which may be Pythagorean:

We must expect everything:  
nothing is beyond expectation.  
All things are easy for God to fulfil,  
nothing is impossible.

(140) They think the guarantee of their beliefs is that it was no ordinary man who first uttered them, but the god: one of the axioms is "Who are you, Pythagoras?". They say he was Hyperborean Apollo, and their proofs are that in standing up in a contest he showed his golden thigh and that he entertained Abaris the Hyperborean and received from him the arrow by which Abaris found his way. (141) This Abaris is said to have come from the Hyperboreans, collecting gold for the temple and predicting plague. He stayed in temples, and was never seen to eat or drink anything. He is also said to have made the "preventive" sacrifice among the Lacedaimonians, and that is why there was never again a plague in Lakedaimon. Pythagoras, then, had from Abaris the golden arrow he carried, without which he could not find his way, and made him his disciple.

(142) At Metapontion, when some people wished they could have what was in a boat sailing towards them, he said, "Well, you'll have a corpse among you" — and the boat proved to be carrying a corpse. At Sybaris he caught and sent away the rough-scaled snake,

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see on 199; Eurytos apparently specified the numbers of man, horse etc. (perhaps in pebble shapes: Philip 33-4).

142 Eunapius 459 says I. once left the road because he knew, by powers of divination, that a corpse had been carried along it. Dead bodies were a religious pollution: Robert Parker, *Miasma* (1983) ch.2. P. predicted the

whose bite is fatal, and likewise in Etruria the little snake whose bite is fatal. In Kroton, they say, the white eagle stood still and let him stroke it. When someone wanted to hear him, he said he would not speak until some sign appeared: and after that the white she-bear appeared in Kaulonia. And when a man was about to tell him of his son's death, he said it first.

(143) He made Myllias of Kroton remember that he was Midas son of Gordios, and Myllias left for the mainland to carry out his instructions about the tomb. They also say that the man who bought his house and dug it up never dared to tell anyone what he saw, but, in return for this sin, he was found temple-robbing in Kroton and executed; he was caught in the act of stealing the golden beard which had fallen from the image. These things, and others like them, are what they say as a guarantee: as these are generally accepted, and it is impossible for them to have happened to an ordinary human being, it must be obvious, they think, that one should accept what he said as coming from someone greater, not a mortal. Even the riddle, they say, means this: (144) they have a saying "Humans are bipeds, and birds, and a third besides" and the third is Pythagoras. His love of truthfulness was reckoned to be like his piety. All Pythagoreans were very scrupulous about oaths, remembering Pythagoras' precept:

Honour first the immortal gods, as the law commands,  
respect an oath by them; and next the noble heroes.

One Pythagorean was required by law to take an oath, which he would have sworn truly; but he chose to pay out three talents, the penalty prescribed at law for failure to swear, for the sake of maintaining the principle.

(145) They believed that nothing happens at random or by chance, but by divine providence, especially to good and pious people. This is confirmed by the story told by Androkydes, in his

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appearance of the she-bear in Kaulonia (Burkert LS 142). 143 Midas son of Gordios: the king of Phrygia with the "Midas touch" which turned all to gold. It is not known what P.'s instructions were, or why the house was dug up (a treasure-hunt?).

*On the Pythagorean Symbols*, about Thymaridas of Taras, a Pythagorean. Circumstances took him away on a voyage; his friends gathered to see him off and bid him godspeed, and one of them said, as he embarked, "May all you want come to you from the gods, Thymaridas!" He replied "Hush, let me rather want all that comes to me from the gods": he thought it greater wisdom and better sense not to resist and kick against divine providence. If it is asked where these men got so much piety, the answer is that Pythagorean "number theology" has a clear precedent in the works of Orpheus. (146) It is no longer disputed that Pythagoras took his inspiration from Orpheus in composing his account of the gods, which he called "holy" precisely because it was culled from the inner mysteries of works of Orpheus. Most people say it really was Pythagoras who wrote the book, but some famous and trustworthy members of the school maintain it was Telauges, from the notes left by Pythagoras to his daughter Damo, sister of Telauges; after her death the notes were given to Bitale,

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145 Providence was a difficulty for many late antique philosophers, because contingent happenings cannot be objects of knowledge, and therefore cannot be known to the gods (see on 58-9). I. argued that knowledge depends on the knowing subject, not on the object known, so the gods' knowledge is as excellent as the gods themselves, and holds temporal events in a timeless vision. See Wallis 29-30. For I.'s confidence in divine government of the world, cf. 215-9. Androkydes is first cited c1 BC, but his date is unknown. de Vogel 168 argues for a C4 BC doctor, physician to Alexander The Great, Philip 148-9 suspects a later date.

146 Orphism, a range of doctrines and practices ascribed to the legendary Thracian singer Orpheus, had much in common with Pythagoreanism. The "Orphic life" required purity and vegetarianism, and Orphic teaching included rites of purification and concern for the afterlife. The traditions became interwoven, and both claimed priority. See Burkert SD. I. wrote a commentary on Orphic texts (Marinus, *Life of Proclus* 27). For P.'s book see 90n; Philip 136-8 and 193-4 on the common tradition. "The narrative about the gods" translates the Greek *hieros logos*: see 90n. L(e)ibethra, in the foothills of Mount Olympus, was a traditional site of Orpheus's death. For Aglaophamos as initiating priest see Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (1987) 31, 33, 69-73. P. would authenticate his teaching by reference to his own teacher, and by producing a *hieros logos*. Kalliope is the Muse of epic poetry. Mount Pangaion, famous for gold-mines, is in Thrace. For P.'s family (names vary) see Burkert LS 114, Philip 187.

daughter of Damo, who was the same age as Telauges. Telauges was Pythagoras's son and Bitale's husband. Pythagoras died when he was very young, and he was left with his mother Theano.

Now it is clear from this Sacred Book (also called *On the Gods*) who gave Pythagoras his account of the gods. It reads "This is the narrative about the gods by Pythagoras son of Mnesarchos. I learnt this by taking part in the rites of Thracian Libethra. Aglaophamos the initiating priest shared with me what Orpheus son of Kalliope said, having learnt it from his mother, on Mount Pangaion: Number is the eternal and provident principle of heaven and earth and what is between, and source of the continuing existence of divine persons, gods and spirits." (147) It is evident from these words that he derived from the Orphics his concept of divine being as defined by number. Through these same numbers he achieved his astonishing predictions, and his worship of the gods was in accordance with the numbers as being most closely related to them. Here is an illustration (for we must adduce an action to prove the truth of what is said). Abaris continued his accustomed religious practices, and made prediction from sacrifices as all barbarian peoples do. He used bird sacrifices especially, for they think bird entrails are best for exact scrutiny. Pythagoras did not want to destroy his zeal for truth, but did want to give him a more reliable method which did not require bloodshed — especially as he believed the cock to be sacred to the sun. So he revealed to him the so-called "total truth" which is based on mathematical knowledge.

(148) His faith in the gods was a fruit of his piety: he always said that one should not disbelieve anything astonishing about the gods or about divine teachings, for the gods can do anything: and we must call divine the teachings — which must be believed — handed down by Pythagoras. That is how his followers believed: they accepted that he had not misled them in the beliefs they held. So when a shepherd told Eurytos of Kroton, pupil of Philolaos, that he had heard at midday the voice of

Philolaos — who had died years before — coming from his tomb as if he were singing, Eurytos said “Tell me, pray, what tune?” And when someone asked Pythagoras himself what it signified that he had dreamt his father, long since dead, was talking to him, Pythagoras replied “Nothing; nor does it signify anything that now you are talking to me.”

(149) He wore clean white clothes and used clean white bedding, made of linen; he did not use fleeces. This custom he handed on to his followers. He spoke as was fitting about the greater ones, and at all times remembered and honoured the gods: he made libation to the gods at dinner and ordained hymns to the greater ones every day. He was interested in voices, prophecies, oracles, all spontaneous occurrences.

(150) He sacrificed to the gods frankincense, millet, cakes, honeycomb, myrrh and the other fragrances. Neither he nor any other of the learned philosophers sacrificed any living thing, and he told the “hearers” and the “civic” followers to sacrifice live creatures only rarely: a cock, a lamb, some other young creature, but not oxen. It is a further proof of his reverence for the gods that he forbade all oaths in their names. Syllós, a Pythagorean of Kroton, paid out money rather than swear an oath, though it would have been a true oath. But there is a form of oath ascribed to the Pythagoreans, since they were reluctant to name Pythagoras (just as they were very sparing in their use of the gods’ names) and indicated him by reference to his discovery of the tetract:

“No, by him who discovered the Tetract of our wisdom,  
the source which contains the springs of everlasting nature”.

(151) Pythagoras, then, in all respects — they say — emulated Orpheus’s interpretation and composition, and honoured the gods as Orpheus did, setting up carved and bronze images, linking the gods not to human form but to the divine foundations, in form and nature like all there is, as they encompass all and take thought for all. Pythagoras also

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151 The images were probably geometrical solids (cf. 88n, 247n.). I. wrote a (lost) work on cult-images (*agalmata*), Larsen 60; he discusses images in

proclaimed their purifications and the rites ascribed to them, having a most exact knowledge of them. His divine wisdom and worship were, they say, a synthesis he made, having learnt some things from the Orphics, some from the Egyptian priests, some from the Chaldaeans and the magi, some from the rite at Eleusis, and from Imbros and Samothrace and Lemnos, and anything worth having from the common rites, and from the Kelts and from Iberia.

(152) Pythagoras' sacred book was also read among the Latins — not to all or by all, but by those who were well-disposed to learn about the good and who engaged in no shameful practices. He said that we make three libations to the gods, and Apollo gives his oracles from a tripod, because number first came into being as a triad. We sacrifice to Aphrodite on the sixth day because six is the first number to share the whole being of

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*On The Mysteries* 3.28-9. The "Chaldaean oracles" were a collection allegedly produced by one Julian the Chaldaean, and his son Julian the Theurgist, in the mid C2 AD: see further Garth Fowden, *Historia* 36(1987)90-4: edition by E. des Places, *Les Oracles Chaldaïques* (Paris 1971). Text and commentaries (by Porphyry, I. in at least 28 books - and Proclus) were earnestly studied in the Athenian philosophical school of the C4-5 AD, as a sacred book in the Hellenic tradition of Plato and Aristotle, rivalling the Christian scriptures. See H.Lewy (1956, ed.2 M.Tardieu 1978) *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*; H.D.Saffrey, *Revue des études augustiniennes* 27 (1981)209-25. For Egyptian wisdom see 12n. Eleusis, in mainland Greece, was the archetypal "mystery cult", devoted to Demeter and her daughter Kore. The gods of Samothrace had secret names, but were sometimes identified with the Kabeiroi of Lemnos, sons of Hephaistos; it was at Samothrace that Cadmus married Harmonia, daughter of Ares and Aphrodite, a myth that must have appealed to Pythagoreans. Lemnos (and perhaps its neighbour Imbros) and Samothrace both claimed pre-Greek "Pelasgian" origins. See W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (ET 1985) 281-5. For the Kelts of the Mysterious West see A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (1975) ch.3. The C2 Christian writer Hippolytus said P.'s follower Zalmoxis (173) converted the Druids: *Refutation of All Heresies* 1.2.17. Iberians may have come in with Moderatus of Gades (Cadiz), a C2 AD Neopythagorean, unless they are the Black Sea Iberians of present-day Georgia.

152 Latins: Numa king of Rome was by tradition a Pythagorean, but he ruled 715-672 BC. Cicero, *On The Republic* 2.28-9 knew that the date was impossible; see R.M.Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy 1-5* (1965) 88-91 for other claims to Pythagorean tradition at Rome. Nigidius Figulus, a C1 BC contemporary of

number, and however you split it up, the product of what is taken away and what is left is the same. We must sacrifice to Herakles on the eighth of the month because he was a seven-months child.

(153) He also says one should go into the temple wearing a clean white garment, in which one has not slept: sleep, black and russet bear witness to idleness, but cleanliness bears witness to fairness in reckoning and justice. If there is an involuntary loss of blood in the temple, it would be purified by gold or seawater, the most beautiful of things and the first of things, equally balanced in honour. One must not give birth in a temple, for it is not right that the soul's divinity should be bound to the body in a sacred place. (154) One should not have hair or nails trimmed at a festival, because we should not advance our own interest by neglecting the rule of the gods. Do not kill even a louse in the temple: the divine being must not share in unnecessary and destructive acts. The gods must be honoured with cedar, laurel,

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Cicero, may have claimed local tradition, and the list at 267 includes four Lucanians; cf.241. See further E.Rawson, *Intellectual Life In the Late Republic* (1985) esp.30-3.

Triad: Aristotle *On The Heaven* 268a 10-15 says "As the Pythagoreans also say, the all and the totality are defined by the number three, because end and middle and beginning have the number of the all, and that is the number of the triad. That is why, having as it were received from nature her laws, we also use this number in the rites of the gods". For the importance of triads in I., see Wallis 130-2. Aphrodite:  $6=1+2+3=1 \times 2 \times 3$ ; that is, six is the first "perfect number", equal to the sum of its divisors.  $6=2 \times 3$ , even  $\times$  odd, so it has both aspects of number. Aphrodite represents *philia*, love, which unites opposites; hence she represents the principle of unity, which is perfection. Further examples of numerology in Delatte *Litt* parts 4-8.

Herakles: Aristotle fr.203 (see KRS 331) cites a belief that 7 is the number of *kairos*, right time (cf.182). The usual myth is that Hera delayed the full-term birth of Herakles so that his mortal kin Eurystheus, a seven-month child, should appropriate Zeus's blessing on the child to be born. There was a widespread belief that a child born after seven months' gestation would survive, but a child born at eight months would not.

153 Black hides dirt, russet hides bloodstains, which are polluting (R.Parker, *Miasma* (1983) ch.4). So, traditionally, was birth (ib. ch.2): here a theological explanation is offered. "White" is supplied from 100, cf.155.

154 Cedar, cypress and myrtle are fragrant woods (cf.Détienne GA ch.2



cypress, oak and myrtle: do not scrape anything from the body or clean the teeth with these, for this was the first generation of moist nature, the nurse of the first more ordinary wood. He said "Don't grill what is stewed" (meaning that tenderness has no need of blazing anger). He forbade the cremation of dead bodies, following the magi, not wishing mortality to share in anything of the divine. (155) He thought it holy to escort the dead in white clothing, as an allusion to the primal simplicity of being which accords with the number and origin of all things.

He said it was of the utmost importance not to be forsworn: the future is far off, but nothing is far from the gods. It is much better to be injured than to kill a human being (the matter will be judged in Hades), taking into consideration the natures concerned with the soul and its being, which is first of all that is. A coffin should not be made of cypress-wood, either because the sceptre of Zeus is made of cypress, or for some other secret reason. Libations should be made before the meal to Saviour Zeus, Herakles and the Dioskouroi, with hymns to Zeus the originator and ruler of nurture, Herakles the power of nature, and the Dioskouroi the universal harmony.

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on fragrances offered to the gods). Laurel is sacred to Apollo; Zeus's oracle at Dodona was a sacred oak, and his sceptre (155) was of cypress. 155 White is an image of the monad, or unity, which is the highest level of being. Plurality, symbolised by varied or shifting colours, derives from unity. The traditional mourning colour was black (cf.153). Murder: cf.179, where the (easier) form of words is "taking in to account the being of the soul, and the primary nature (*physis*) of the things that are". The things that (really) are (cf.159-60) are the Intelligibles, the unchanging transcendent universals which are the objects of thought of the divine Intelligence. Human souls, for I., are intermediate between the Intelligence and the material world; with the gods' help they can be raised to contemplate the Intelligibles. (Wallis 119-20, Steel part I.) Hence the human composite of soul and body must be respected. Libations: as at 153, a theological gloss on the traditional practice. Threefold libations were standard; the recipients varied with the occasion. Herakles and the Dioskouroi (Castor and Pollux) are the most famous examples of sons of Zeus who achieved divine status. The Dioskouroi shared their immortality, alternating death and life (*Odyssey* 11.301-4): for interpretations see Burkert LS 349-50, and on Herakles JH 132-3.

(156) One should not make libations with closed eyes, for nothing good deserves shame and modesty. When it thunders, one should touch the earth, remembering the coming-to-be of what there is. One should enter sacred places from the right and leave them on the left, for he held the right to be the origin of odd numbers, and divine, but the left to be the symbol of even numbers which are divisible. This, then, is what is said of his custom in the practice of piety; and since other aspects, which I have omitted, may be deduced from what has been said, I leave this topic.

29 The wisdom of Pythagoras: what it was, the kinds into which he divided it, and how he achieved and transmitted correctness and precision in all capacities for knowledge, from the first to the ultimate.

(157) As for his wisdom, to put it simply, the sayings recorded by the Pythagoreans may stand as the best evidence. They contain the truth about everything; by comparison with all other writings they are terse, but they are exceptional in their antique patina, like a surface bloom which cannot be touched. They have been composed with consummate and supernatural knowledge, packed full of ideas, yet complex and varied in form and material. They include nothing superfluous yet show no deficiency in language: they are full to capacity of clear and indisputable fact, presented with scientific demonstration and (as the phrase is) complete deductive arguments. One need only approach them by the proper route, not casually, carelessly, or for

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156 Thunder: the weapon of Zeus, who (when envisaged as the One God) is the originator of all there is. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 94b33, says Pythagoreans think thunder frightens the wicked souls in Tartarus; in Plato *Rep.* 621d a thunderstorm precedes the return to earth of reincarnated souls. Odd and even: odd is divine because it is equated with the principle of Limit, which delimits or defines all there is; even numbers, being divisible, are not finite (see further Dillon MP3-5). The Pythagorean "table of opposites" (Aristotle, *Met.* 986a22, translated KRS 337-9) puts "right" on the same side as "odd" and "left" on the same side as "even".

form's sake. These, then, convey the knowledge he handed down from the beginning about the objects of thought and about the gods.

(158) Next he explained the whole of physics; he perfected both ethics and logic; he passed on all kinds of learning and science. Everything which has become part of human knowledge on any subject is fully dealt with in these writings. If it is accepted that some of the writings now in circulation are by Pythagoras, and some were composed from what he taught (which is why those who wrote them did not claim authorship, but ascribed them to Pythagoras, as being by him), it is evident from all these that Pythagoras was exceptionally well-versed in all kinds of wisdom.

They say he made a particular study of geometry. There are many geometrical problems in Egypt, because from ancient times (and indeed from the gods) their learned men have had to measure all the land cultivated by the Egyptians, on account of what the Nile adds and takes away. That is how geometry — the measurement of land— got its name. But neither did they neglect the study of the heavens, and in that too Pythagoras was expert. It is thought that knowledge about lines derives from Egypt, whereas calculation and number theory were invented by people in Phoenicia, and astronomy some ascribe jointly to the Egyptians and the Chaldaeans. (159) Pythagoras took over all these traditions, advanced all the sciences, and demonstrated them in clear and orderly exposition to his own students.

He was the first to use the word "philosophy": he said it was a desire or a kind of love, for wisdom, and wisdom was knowledge of the truth which dwells in being. And being, as he knew and said, is that which is immaterial, eternal, the only active principles, namely the incorporeal. Other things which are called "being" are given the same name only because they participate in what really is: these are corporeal, material forms,

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158-9 Ethics, physics and logic: the standard divisions of Stoic philosophy (DL 7.39).

159-60: see 58-9n.

which come into being and are destroyed, and never really are. Wisdom is the knowledge of those things which exist in the strict sense, not those which are given the name of "being", for corporeal things are not objects of knowledge: there is no secure knowledge of them to be had, for they are not finite in number, cannot be grasped by knowledge, and in a sense do not exist at all, in that they are separate from universals and cannot be precisely defined. (160) And it is not possible to conceive of a knowledge of that which by nature is unknowable: so it is not reasonable for there to be desire for a nonexistent knowledge, but rather for knowledge of what genuinely exists and is always the same, remaining unchanged, and always properly called "being". And in fact understanding of these is followed by understanding of what is called by the same name, although one has not worked for it, just as knowledge of the part follows from knowledge of the whole. "People who have an exact knowledge of the whole," says Archytas, "will see the parts correctly, as they are." That is why the things which exist are not isolated, unique, simple, but are seen as complex and varied: both the incorporeal objects of thought, which are called "being", and the corporeal things in the domain of perception, which share by participation in really coming to be.

(161) Pythagoras handed down detailed knowledge of all this, leaving nothing uninvestigated. He also gave humanity general knowledge, such as demonstration, definition and distinction, as may be seen from the Pythagorean records. His practice was to use the very briefest speech to spark off in his disciples, by the method of symbols, infinitely varied interpretations; just as Apollo Pythios with a few easily handled words, or nature herself with seeds which are small in size, manifests an endless and almost inconceivable multitude of ideas and their fruition. (162) One such is Pythagoras' own aphorism, "the beginning is half of all". But not only in that half-line, but in others like it, the most divine Pythagoras hid the sparks of truth for those able to kindle them; his brevity of

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160 Archytas: see 127n.

speech conceals a boundless treasury of knowledge, as in "all things correspond to number" (the aphorism he repeated most often to everyone), or "love is equality", or in the word "cosmos", or indeed "philosophy", or "being", or the famous "tetract". All these, and many others, were conceived by Pythagoras as things composed and formed for the benefit and amendment of those who studied with him: those who understood them revered them so highly, treating them as divine, that they became a form of oath used by the disciples;

"No, by him who gave the Tetract to our people,  
the source which contains the springs of everlasting nature."

This, then, was the remarkable nature of his wisdom.

(163) Of the kinds of knowledge, they say, the Pythagoreans honour most music, medicine and divination. They are silent, they listen, and the one who can hear is praised among them. In medicine, their particular tradition is concern for dietetics, which they have brought to a fine art. First they tried to learn the signs of proportion in exertion, food, and rest, and they were almost the first to concern themselves with regulating the preparation of food. Pythagoreans made more use of fomentations than their predecessors, and thought less highly of drugs; among these, they made most use of those which treat ulcers. They rejected surgery and cautery. (164) They also used incantations to treat some illnesses, thinking that music too, if properly used, is of great benefit to health; and they used selected readings from

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162 Tetract: see 82n.

163-4 Medicine: the tradition survives in alternatives to modern Western medicine. Plato, *Timaeus* 89bd, says diseases have their natural course to run, and drugs make matters worse. On surgery see L. Edelstein, *The Hippocratic Oath* (1943), who argues that the Oath ascribes to Hippocrates the principles of Pythagorean doctors: no surgical intervention (even for gallstones), no abortion and no euthanasia. See further de Vogel ch. 10. 244 recapitulates 163, except in that the mss. reading is "proportion of, drinks (*poton*) food and rest"; here it is "exertions (*ponon*) food and rest" cf. [Hippocrates] *Regimen* 1.2, and 208 below on the effect of what is consumed. The mss. include *chre* (Greek "it is necessary") before "fomentations": Deubner deletes it, Albrecht sees a corruption of *chrismaton*, "ointments" or "oilings". Homer and Hesiod: cf. 111, and 9n.

Homer and Hesiod to restore the soul.

They thought one should hold and keep safe in the memory everything taught and said, and acquire learning and doctrines to the limit of one's capacity for learning and remembering: that is knowing as one should and keeping knowledge where one should. They set great store by memory, training it and exercising it carefully, never leaving what was taught until they had a firm grasp of what was first learnt, and recalling what was said each day, in the following way.

(165) A Pythagorean did not get up until he had called to mind all that had happened the previous day. This is how he recalled it: he tried to recollect what he had first said, or heard, or told the people in the house, when he got up, then what second, and what third, and so for what followed. Then whom he had met first, and whom next, when he went out, and what was said first and second and third, and so for other matters. He tried to recollect everything that had happened in the entire day, endeavouring to recall it in sequence, as each happening had occurred. If he could spare more time in getting up, he tried to recollect in the same way the events of two days before. (166) They made great efforts to train the memory, for nothing has more effect on knowledge, experience and understanding than the ability to remember.

These practices caused all Italy to be filled with philosophers, and to be called Great Greece (though formerly unknown) on account of Pythagoras. Many philosophers, poets and legislators arose there. Rhetorical skills, set-piece speeches, and written laws were taken from these men to Greece. Those who have made some record of physics name first Empedokles and Parmenides of Elea; those who want a pithy saying on life quote Epicharmos — almost all philosophers know him by heart.

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166 Great Greece (Magna Graecia) is attested from the C4 BC as the name of (Greek) South Italy. For Empedokles see 64-7n. Parmenides (KRS VIII) came from Elea in South Italy, mid C5 BC, and traditionally had Pythagorean connections. Epicharmos was a Sicilian writer of comedies, early C5 BC, who became a candidate for pseudepigrapha: the fragments translated in Barnes I.106-7 show why.

Let this, then, be my account of his wisdom, and how he advanced all humanity a great distance on the path of wisdom, insofar as each was capable of having a share in wisdom, and how he handed down wisdom in its completeness.

30 On justice: how much Pythagoras contributed to its practice among people; and how from its highest and loftiest forms to its ultimate applications, he practised it and handed it on to everyone.

(167) Now concerning justice: we shall best understand his own practice of it, and the tradition he left, if we grasp the origin of justice and the causes from which it arises, and also the first cause of injustice. Then we may discover how he warded off injustice and made it possible for justice to thrive. The origin of justice, then, is community feeling and fairness, for all to share experience, approximating as closely as possible to one body and one soul, and for everyone to say "mine" and "someone else's" about the same thing (just as Plato also testifies, having learnt it from the Pythagoreans). (168) Pythagoras established this best of all men, eradicating all selfishness of character and extending the sense of community to the very last possessions, the things which cause faction and disruption. Everything was in common and the same for all: no-one had any private property. One who liked community living used the common possessions in the most just way; one who did not took back his own property, and more than he had brought to the common store, and left. Thus he established justice, in the best possible way, from its first principle. Furthermore, fellow-feeling with other people brings about justice, whereas alienation and contempt for fellow-humans creates injustice. In his concern to instil this fellow-feeling most deeply in people, he also established it towards the creatures which are kin to us, telling us to think of them as friends and kinsfolk, and not to harm or kill or eat any. (169)

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167-8 The Plato reference is *Republic* 462b-e. "Fellow-feeling" (168) translates *oikeiosis*, the Stoic technical term for awareness of something as belonging to oneself: see S.G.Pembroke in *Problems of Stoicism* ed.A.A.Long (1971).

Now if he made other animals kin to humans, because they are made of the same elements as ourselves and share life with us, how much more did he induce fellow-feeling for those who share the same kind of soul and reasoning power! It is clear from this that he brought about a justice which arose from the soundest principle. And since many people have been driven to act unjustly for lack of money, he provided for this too: his management of the household provided for generous and just expenditure in a manner appropriate to himself. In general, just arrangements for the household are the foundation of good government in the whole city, for cities are made up of households.

(170) Pythagoras himself, they say, inherited the property of Alkaïos (who died after his embassy to Sparta) and was admired no less for his household management than for his philosophy. Having married, he brought up his daughter, who later married Menon of Kroton, so that before her marriage she led the choruses, and as a wife she was first to approach the altars. The people of Metapontion, still keeping Pythagoras in remembrance even after his times, made his house a shrine of Demeter, and its entrance a shrine of the Muses.

(171) Arrogance, self-indulgence and contempt for law often prompt injustice: Pythagoras said, therefore, that every day one should assist the law and fight against lawlessness. That is also why he drew up a list like this: what is called self-indulgence is the first evil to slip into households and cities; second comes arrogance; third comes ruin. So one must always avoid and fend off indulgence, and be accustomed from birth to a temperate and virile way of life, and keep oneself clean from evil speaking, insult, aggression, abuse, and vulgar attempts to arouse laughter.

(172) He also founded another excellent kind of justice: legislation, which enjoins what must be done and forbids what must not. It is better than lawcourts, which, like a doctor, cure the sick, for it prevents people getting sick in the first place, and

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170 Muses, Demeter: see P.Boyancé (l.c.45n.), who notes the importance of Demeter in South Italian cult. For P.'s family members, see 146n.



makes provision from the outset for the health of the soul. That is why the best legislators were students of Pythagoras: first Charondas of Katana, then Zaleukos and Timaratos who wrote laws for Lokroi, and Theaitetos and Helikaon and Aristokrates and Phytios, who were the legislators for Rhegion. All these were given honours equal to the gods by their fellow-citizens. (173) They did not legislate as Herakleitos said he would for the Ephesians, telling them to hang themselves in youth, but with profound thought and political science. This is not surprising in those who had been born and brought up as free men, but Zalmoxis the Thracian, who became Pythagoras' slave and listened to all his words, was set free, went among the Getae and made laws for them, just as I have described, and roused the citizens to courage by convincing them that the soul is immortal. Even today all the Galatians, and the Trallians, and most of the barbarians teach their sons that the soul of the dead cannot be destroyed, but survives, and that death is not to be feared, but dangers must be faced with confidence. Having taught the Getae this, and written the laws for them, he is the greatest of gods among them.

(174) Pythagoras thought that the rule of the gods was yet more conducive to the establishment of justice, and derived from it society and laws, justice and just acts. It is worth setting out his argument in detail. The Pythagoreans, learning from him, thought it beneficial to believe that the divine power exists and is disposed towards the human race so as to be concerned and not to despise it. We need a government against which we shall not see fit to rebel: divine government is such, for divinity is worthy to rule over all there is. They say, correctly, that living creatures are naturally aggressive, and experience a range of impulses and desires and other states of emotion, so they need this kind of control and threat to bring about moderation and order.

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172 Legislators: see 130 and n.

173 Herakleitos fr.121 DK. Zalmoxis: Herodotus 4.95; references to further discussion in Vatai 144 n.82. The Galatians and the Trallians lived to the north of I's homeland.

(175) So each one, realising the complexity of his nature, should never forget piety and worship of the divine, but should always keep in mind that the god watches over human progress. After the divine and spiritual power, they assigned the greatest importance to parents and the law: one should be subject to these not from conformity but from conviction. In general, they thought one should hold anarchy to be the greatest evil, for human beings cannot be saved if no-one is in control.(176) The Pythagoreans thought it right to abide by ancestral customs and conventions, even if they were rather worse than those of others: it is neither beneficial nor safe lightly to desert the existing laws, and adapt oneself to innovation.

Pythagoras did much else that was concerned with piety towards the gods, showing his life to be in accord with his teachings. It is worth mentioning one episode to illustrate the rest: (177) I shall report what Pythagoras said and did in response to the embassy which came from Sybaris to Kroton to ask for the return of exiles. Some of his students had been killed by those who had come as ambassadors: one was a murderer, the other the son of one of the partisans, who had died of disease. The people of Kroton were still uncertain how to handle the matter. Pythagoras said to his disciples that he would not want the Krotoniates to be quite out of harmony with him, and to drag suppliants from the altars when he himself did not think victims should be taken there. The Sybarites came and reproached him: the murderer defended himself against the charges, but Pythagoras said there was no response. That is why they accused him of claiming to be Apollo — and also because of an earlier occasion, when someone asked about some subject under investigation “Why is this so?”, and he replied with another question, “Would you ask Apollo to give reasons for an oracle?”.

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176 mss. have “a little (*mikroi*) worse”; Deubner has “much (*makroi*) worse”, comparing DS 12.16.3 on the laws of Charondas.

177 cf.133. DS 12.9.2ff, probably from the competent C4 BC historian Ephoros, shows that these exiles were aristocrats; Telys, tyrant of Sybaris, was supported by anti-aristocratic feeling. The episode occurred c.510 BC.

(178) The other man, thinking he was laughing to scorn the lectures in which Pythagoras demonstrated that souls return to earth, said that when Pythagoras was on his way to Hades he would give him a letter to his father, and ask him to bring the reply when he came back. But Pythagoras said he did not propose to venture into the place of the impious, where, as he well knew, murderers were punished. The ambassadors abused him, so he went down to the sea and purified himself, followed by a crowd. One of the Krotoniate councillors said, after denouncing the other aims of the ambassadors, that they had also been mad to cross Pythagoras: if we were back in the first age of which the stories tell, when all living creatures spoke like humans, not even an animal would have dared say a word against him.

(179) He found another way of turning people from injustice, by the judgement of souls: he knew it to be a true story, and also knew it to be useful for inspiring fear of injustice. He said it was far better to be injured than to kill a human being (for the judgement rests in the underworld), taking into account the being of the soul and the primary nature of the things that are. He wanted to show how justice, in the midst of unequal, disproportionate and indefinite things, is defined, equal and proportionate, and to suggest how it should be practised. So he said justice was like the only geometrical figure which has an unlimited number of combinations of lines; they are disparate in relation to each other, but the demonstrations of the squares remain equal.

(180) Now there is also a kind of justice in dealings with others, and the Pythagoreans taught that too, in the following way. There is, they said, a right way and a wrong way of talking to people: it varies with age, status, kinship and favours done,

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179 Socrates, in Plato's *Gorgias*, uses the judgement in Hades as a salutary but unprovable story; Pythagoras had been to see (DL 8.21). On murder see 155n. For the geometrical analogy see 130-1n; the figure is, again, a scalene right-angled triangle. "The demonstrations of the squares remain equal" means, I think, that the squares are in the same proportion to each other, whatever the length of the sides.

and with any other such difference between people. For instance, there is a kind of conversation which is appropriate from one young man to another, but not for one's elders: not all kinds of anger, menace or brashness are <out of place>, but any such inappropriate conduct must be avoided by a younger man talking to an older one. The same principle applies to status: (181) it is not good or suitable behaviour to say what you like, or to behave in any other of the ways just described, to a man who has a deserved and distinguished reputation. Much the same was said about conversation with parents or benefactors. Behaviour suited to the occasion is varied and takes many forms. Of those who get angry or indignant, when people have a desire or wish or impulse for something, for some it is the right moment to follow it and for others not. The same applies to other experiences, acts, states of mind, conversations and encounters.

(182) The right moment can be taught, up to a point, is amenable to rational principles and can be systematically treated, but none of these applies to it overall and simply. "Due season", what is proper, what is fitting, and anything else of the kind are consequent on the right moment and are in general such as to belong with its nature. In everything the starting-point is one of the most important matters: in knowledge, in experience, in coming to be, and indeed in a household or a city or an army or any such association. But in all these the nature of the starting-point is hard to perceive or survey. In the sciences, it takes an exceptional intellect to understand and correctly assess the principle when one considers the parts of the subject-matter. (183) But it makes a great difference — indeed, everything is at risk — if the principle is not correctly grasped, for, to put it plainly, if the true principle is not recognised, all that follows is vitiated. And the same applies to government (the other *arche*): neither in a household nor a city can life be properly lived, if there is no genuine ruler who exercises freely-chosen

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180 "out of place" is Deubner's supplement; 181 confirms that anger etc. are sometimes appropriate.

183 *arche* means both "beginning" and "rule" (cf. Latin *principium*): the buck starts here.

government. Both ruler and ruled must want there to be government, just as in learning, when it happens properly, both teacher and pupil want it. If either party is reluctant, in these situations, the task in hand cannot be properly fulfilled. So Pythagoras approved of obedience to rulers and submission to teachers, and gave impressive proof of this in action. (184) He travelled from Italy to Delos to nurse Pherekydes of Syros, his former teacher, who had fallen victim to the disease described as phtheiriasis, and remained with him until his death, fulfilling all the duties of piety towards his tutor: such was the value he set on concern for one's teacher.

(185) Pythagoras also trained his disciples in faithful adherence to agreements. He did this so well that once, they say, Lysis went to pray in the temple of Hera, and as he came out met in the temple entrance Euryphamos of Syracuse, one of the disciples, who was going in. Euryphamos said "Wait for me until I have prayed too and come out", so Lysis sat down on a stone seat which was there. Euryphamos, having prayed, was engaged in deep reflection, and came out by another door and went away, forgetting him. Lysis waited almost without moving for the rest of the day, all night and most of the next day, and might have stayed there for longer if Euryphamos had not gone to the auditorium the next day, heard the disciples asking for Lysis, and remembered. He found Lysis still waiting, as was agreed, and took him away, explaining the cause of his forgetfulness and adding "Some god must have sent it upon me, as a test of your steadfastness in keeping an agreement".

(186) He required abstinence from living creatures for many reasons, and especially because the practice makes for peace: people who were accustomed to be disgusted by the killing of animals, thinking it contrary to law and nature, found the killing

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184 see 9n. Phtheiriasis (terminal infestation by lice) is unknown to modern medicine: the best guess is scabies (caused by mites). See Ian C.Beavis, *Insects and Other Invertebrates in Classical Antiquity* (1988) 116-8. The disease usually attacked those thought to deserve divine punishment.

of a human being even more contrary to divine law, and ceased to make war. And war finances and legislates for murders, for deaths build up its strength. His saying "Do not step over the yoke" is an exhortation to justice and an instruction to practise all just actions, as will be shown in my discussion of symbols. So through all these Pythagoras manifested great concern for training in justice, and established a tradition of justice in words and deeds alike.

31 How Pythagoras practised self-control and handed it on by words and deeds and all kinds of achievement, and the varieties of self-control he established among people.

(187) After the account of justice comes that of self-control, and how Pythagoras practised it and handed it on to those who make use of it. I have already mentioned his well-known instructions on the subject, including the requirement to destroy with fire and iron everything that is out of proportion. Of the same kind are abstinence from all living things and from some over-stimulating foodstuffs; the custom of serving delicious and extravagant foods at banquets but sending them back to the servants, because they had been set out only to chasten desires; and the declaration that no free-born woman should wear gold, but only prostitutes. The practice of alerting the reason and purifying what obstructs it is of the same kind. (188) Then "holding one's peace" and outright silence work for the control of the tongue, and all the following will be ranged in pursuit of the same virtue: intense and unremitting pursuit and practice of the most abstruse theoretical studies; abstinence from wine, and frugality in food and sleep, to assist in this; spontaneous rejection of fame and wealth and the like; sincere reverence for those who have gone before, unfeigned goodwill and fellow-feeling for one's peers, and willing encouragement, without envy, of those younger than oneself.

(189) We may see the self-control of the Pythagoreans, and

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186 "My discussion of symbols": in *Protrepticus* 21(p.114P).

188 almost verbatim 68-9 (and see 225-6).

the tradition Pythagoras gave them, from what Hippobotos and Neanthes say about the Pythagoreans Myllias and Timycha. Dionysios the tyrant, they say, found it impossible to achieve the friendship of any Pythagorean, for they kept aloof from his lawless and monarchical tendency. So he sent a troop of thirty men, commanded by Eurymenes of Syracuse the brother of Dion, to ambush them on their regular move from Taras to Metapontion. (They adapted themselves to the changes of the seasons, and chose places suited to them.) (190) Eurymenes set his ambush in Phanai, a district of Taras which was full of ravines, through which their route would have to pass. The Pythagoreans, suspecting nothing, arrived about midday, and the soldiers attacked them like brigands, shouting war-cries. They were terrified by the suddenness and the scale of the attack (for there were ten of them at most), and because they were unarmed against men in full armour and were bound to be captured if they fought it out, so they decided to save themselves by running away. They did not think this alien to virtue, for they knew that courage is the knowledge of what is to be avoided and what is to be endured, as right reason suggests. (191) They were already succeeding in this, because Eurymenes' men were weighed down by their armour and were left behind in the pursuit, but in their flight they reached some level ground on which was a flourishing bean-crop. Unwilling to transgress the commandment not to touch beans, they stood their ground, and of necessity all fought off their pursuers with stones and sticks and anything else to hand, to such effect that some of them were killed and several wounded. But all the Pythagoreans were killed by the spearmen: not one was taken alive, but, following the commands of their school, they chose death.

(192) Eurymenes and his men were extremely perturbed by the

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189 Hippobotos was a doxographer, Neanthes a biographer, of the C3 BC; both used by Apollonius, according to de Vogel appendix C (see Introduction n.11). Porphyry, *Life of P.* 1-2, cites Neanthes on P.'s family of birth: the stories differ from I.4-9. Dionysius the tyrant was Dionysius II of Syracuse, nephew of Plato's friend Dion: cf. 233.

thought of bringing not one captive alive to Dionysios, who had sent them for that specific purpose. They heaped earth on the fallen, made them a common shrine, and turned back at once. Then Myllias of Kroton and his wife Timycha of Lakedaimon came to meet them. They had been left behind the others, for Timycha was in the last month of pregnancy and therefore walked slowly. So they captured these two and thankfully took them to the tyrant, taking great care to keep them secure on the way. (193) He asked all about what had happened, and seemed greatly affected. "But you shall have the honour you deserve," he said, "above all others, if you will rule together with me." Myllias and Timycha refused all his promises. "Teach me one thing," he said, "and you shall go free with a suitable escort." Myllias asked what he was so eager to learn. "This," said Dionysios, "the reason why your companions chose to die rather than tread on beans." Myllias promptly replied "They were prepared to die rather than tread on beans, and I would rather tread on beans than tell you the reason". (194) Dionysios was astounded, and ordered that Myllias should be taken away and Timycha be tortured. He thought that a woman, pregnant, without her husband to support her, would readily speak out for fear of torture. But she, noble woman, clamped her teeth on her tongue, bit it off and spat it at the tyrant, demonstrating that even if what was female in her was defeated by torture and compelled to betray one of the things to be kept silent, she had got rid of the part which would enable her to do so. Such was the extent of their reluctance to agree to external friendships, even with kings.

(195) The commands about silence are similar: they also train in self-control, for the hardest kind of control is that of the tongue. Persuading the Krotoniates to abstain from their unhallowed and unlawful intercourse with concubines belongs to the same virtue; so does correction by music, with which he brought back to self-control the young man who had been driven wild by love. And exhortation to avoid aggression relates to self-control also.



(196) Pythagoras also handed on to his followers these traditions, for which he himself was responsible. They try to keep their bodies in the same condition, not skinny at one time and fleshy at another, for that, they thought, was the proof of an irregular life. Similarly, in mind, they aimed at a moderate and consistent happiness, not full of gladness at one time and downcast at another. They fended off anger, depression and perturbation, and they had a precept that to sensible people nothing in the human condition should be unexpected: they should expect everything that was not within their own control. But if anger or grief or anything else of that kind affected them, they got rid of it: each, by himself, tried to digest and to cure his emotion.

(197) It is also said that no Pythagorean ever punished a slave, or rebuked a free man, in anger: he would wait for his mind to recover its tone. (They called rebuking "tuning".) The waiting took place in silence and calm. Spintharos often told a story about Archytas of Taras, who visited his farm after an absence, on his return from his city's campaign against the Messapians, and found that the bailiff and the other slaves had not been conscientious in farming, but quite exceptionally negligent. He was as enraged and furious as he could be; and he told them, it seems, that they were lucky he was angry with them, for otherwise they would not have gone unscathed for so great a fault. (198) He said there was a similar story told about Kleinias, who also postponed all reprimands and punishments until his mind had recovered its tone. They also avoided bursts of pity, weeping and other such, and did not allow profit, desire, anger, ambition or anything like that to be a cause of division: all the Pythagoreans felt for each other as a good father would for his children.

It is a fine thing that they ascribe and attribute everything to Pythagoras, not seeking individual fame for their discoveries except upon rare occasions. There are very few Pythagoreans whose

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197 Spintharos was the father of Aristoxenos (see on 233). The Messapians were a people of southern Italy. For Archytas, see 127n.

writings are known. (199) And their excellence in keeping secrets also provokes admiration: in all those generations, no-one before the time of Philolaos, it seems, ever came upon any Pythagorean records. He was the first to publish the notorious "three books", which Dion of Syracuse is said to have bought, on Plato's advice, for one hundred minai, at a time when Philolaos was desperately poor. Philolaos himself belonged to the Pythagorean fellowship, and that was how he acquired the books.

(200) This, they say, is what Pythagoreans say about beliefs. It is silly to adhere to any and every belief, especially if it is widely held, for only a few are capable of having the right beliefs and opinions: these, evidently, are the ones who know, and they are few, so it is clear that this capacity cannot extend to the many. It is also silly to despise every belief and opinion, for a man with that attitude of mind will become incorrigibly ignorant. One who lacks knowledge must learn what he does not know, and one who is learning must adhere to the belief and opinion of the one who does know and can teach; (201) and in general, young people, to come through safely, must accept the beliefs and opinions of older people who have lived good lives.

In human life as a whole there are distinct ages (as they put it), and it takes someone of more than ordinary ability to link them together; each one drives out the former, unless the person is properly brought up from birth. So a boy's education must be good and temperate and courageous, including much to carry on into young manhood; and the training of young men must be good and courageous and temperate, including much to carry on to manhood.

What happens to most people is absurd and ridiculous. (202)

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199 cp.158 and 226-7; cf.89 for publication motivated by poverty. Philolaos (KRS XI, Barnes II.4) was the leading Pythagorean of the later C5 BC; there is much dispute on whether any fragments are authentic, and how far they influenced Aristotle's account of Pythagoreanism (Philip 119-22). Burkert LS 223-4 suggests that the story of the sale comes from a preface designed to authenticate the "three books".

As boys, they are expected to be disciplined and controlled, and to keep away from anything vulgar or shameful, but when they become young men most people let them do what they want. Both kinds of fault generally come together at this age: young men have many failings, both childish and adult. They avoid all kinds of commitment and order, to put it plainly, and go after fun, indiscipline and boyish aggression, and that is characteristic of childhood: the childish disposition carries on into the next period of life. But intense desires and ambitions and all other such intransigent and disruptive impulses and dispositions reach back from manhood into youth. So that time of life needs the greatest care of all.

(203) In general, a human being should never be allowed to do as he likes. There should always be a government, a lawful and decorous authority, to which each citizen is subject. Any animal, left to itself and disregarded, quickly lapses into vice. The Pythagoreans often asked why we train children to take their food in a proper, well-behaved fashion, and show them that order and decorum are good things, and their opposites, disorder and behaviour out of place, are disgraceful — and such are the drunkard and the glutton, lying under heavy reproach. If none of this is useful when we reach manhood, there is no point in training us like this when we are children: and the same applies to other habits. (204) We do not see this happening with the other creatures trained by humans. Puppies and foals are trained to learn from the outset what they will have to do when full-grown.

The Pythagoreans told their followers and associates that if anything heeds caution, it is pleasure: no other experience has more power to trip us up and land us in error. In general, it seems, they exerted themselves never to do anything with pleasure as an aim (since that aim is usually shameful and harmful), but to act with an eye first to what is good and honourable, second to what is advantageous and beneficial — and that requires unusual judgement.

(205) As for what is called “physical desire”, this is what they said. This desire is a movement of the soul: it is an impulse,

or reaching out, for some kind of filling up, or for the presence of something experienced by the senses, or for a state of the senses. (There is also desire for the opposites of these: for emptying something out, for the absence of something, or for not being aware of it.) It is a complex experience, perhaps the most varied in the human condition. Most human desires are acquired and fabricated by the humans themselves, which is why this experience needs exceptional care, caution and strength. When the body is empty, it is natural to desire food; conversely, when it is full, it is natural to desire the appropriate emptying. But the desire for unnecessary food; unnecessary and luxurious clothing and bedding; unnecessary, expensive and luxurious housing, is acquired. The same applies to tableware, drinking cups, waiters and slaves who specialise in food. (206) In general, of all human passions, this is the one which stops nowhere but goes on for ever. So we must attend to those growing up from their earliest youth, so that they will desire what they ought, and guard against pointless and superfluous desires, being undisturbed and pure from such longings, and despising those who deserve contempt and are captives of desire. It is for the first importance to detect pointless, harmful, superfluous and aggressive desires when they occur in those who have resources to hand: there is nothing so absurd that children, men and women of that kind will not set their hearts on it.

(207) In general, the human race is extremely varied in the range of its desires, and there is clear proof of this in the range of what is on offer. There is an infinite variety of fruits and roots which humans can eat; people also eat all kinds of meat, and it is a hard task to find some land, air or water animal they do not eat. And there are all kinds of techniques for preparing food and compounding sauces. So it is not surprising that humankind is diverse, not to say crazy, in the movement of the soul, for each thing on offer causes its own peculiar state of mind. People take

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205-7 The themes of I.'s treatment of pleasure may be followed in J.M.Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (1969) ch.3; *The Greeks on Pleasure* ed.J.C.B.Gosling and C.C.W.Taylor (1982).

notice of what causes immediate and major alteration, like wine, which when drunk in abundance makes people happier up to a point, and then makes them wilder and worse behaved, but they ignore what does not display such power. But everything consumed causes its own state of mind. So it requires great wisdom to understand how much food, and of what kind, one should eat. This knowledge belongs originally to Apollo and Paion, and next to the students of Asklepios.

(209) As for procreation, they have this to say. In general, one should avoid precocious childbearing (neither plants nor animals bear good fruit if "forced"): there must be a period of time before fruiting, so that seeds and fruits may come from strong, full-grown bodies. So boys and girls must be brought up with suitable hard work, exercise and endurance, with food suited to a hardworking, self-controlled, persevering way of life. Many aspects of human existence are better learned late, and these include sexual experience. (210) Boys should be brought up not to look for sexual intercourse before the age of twenty, and when they do reach that age their experiences should be few. This will occur if good health is valued, for dissipation and good health cannot coexist in the same person. The Pythagoreans approved the traditional Greek custom of not being with a mother, daughter or sister, either in a temple or in the open: it was, they thought, a good and beneficial thing to create as many obstacles as possible to that activity. They held, it seems, that one should eliminate all unnatural and violent acts of begetting, leaving only, among those which occur naturally and with moderation, those intended for the chaste and lawful procreation of children.

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208 *Paion* became a title of Apollo as healer. Asklepios was son of Apollo; at his sanctuary on Kos, headquarters of the Hippocratic school, patients received diagnosis and treatment in dreams; Julian, *Against The Galilaeans*, presents him as a rival to Christ (JH 167-8). For diet and medicine, see 163.

209-13 On Pythagorean sexual ethics, see Detienne GA ch.6. 210: "being with" (Greek *sungignesthai*) can connote sexual intercourse, cf. 78 on avoidance of incest. "In a temple or in the open" probably means "outside the house": at home, there were witnesses

(211) They held that those embarking on procreation should take careful thought for their descendants. Their first and greatest concern should be to come to procreation having maintained, and still maintaining, a moderate and healthy lifestyle; not unsuitably glutted with food, not having consumed anything which worsens the state of the body, and least of all drunk. They thought seed of poor quality was produced by a body in poor condition, disturbed and discordant. (212) In general, they thought it was the act of a thoroughly lazy and reckless man, when intending to make a living being and to bring another person into existence, not to take the greatest care that the arrival in existence of those conceived should be as favourable as possible. Dog-fanciers take the utmost care over breeding from the right parents at the right time, when the parents are in the proper condition, so that the puppies will be good-tempered. So do bird-fanciers — (213) and obviously anyone concerned with pedigree breeding in any species takes great care to prevent breeding at random. But humans take no thought for their own offspring: they beget them at random and by chance, on the spur of the moment, then raise and educate them in the most casual fashion. And this is the strongest and clearest reason for the poor condition of most humans: most people procreate like the beasts of the field, at random.

Such are the recommendations and practices of the Pythagoreans concerning self-control: the precepts were handed down like Delphic oracles from Pythagoras himself.

32 Pythagoras' precepts on courage: his own methods of training and noble actions, and those he caused his associates to perform.

(214) As for courage, much of what has already been mentioned is also bound up with courage: for instance, the amazing deeds of Timycha and those who chose to die rather than transgress Pythagoras' command about beans, and other such manifestations of courageous practice, including

Pythagoras' own noble actions. He travelled everywhere alone, exposed to countless labours and perils; he chose to leave his homeland and spend time abroad; he overthrew tyrannies and brought order to cities in turmoil, giving them freedom in place of slavery and putting a stop to lawlessness, removing aggression and checking aggressive and tyrannical men, making himself a gentle guide for just and civilized persons but expelling savage and aggressive men from his company, declaring that there was no response for these, working earnestly with the just but opposing the unjust with all his might.

(215) There are many examples of his virtuous acts, on many occasions, which could be cited, but the greatest is his unshaken independence of speech and action towards Phalaris. For when he was detained by Phalaris, the most savage of the tyrants, he was visited by a wise man — Hyperborean by race and Abaris by name — who came for the express purpose of being with him. Abaris asked him questions on very sacred matters, about cult-images and the most holy form of worship and divine providence, and about those things which are in heaven and those which range over the earth, and many other such enquiries. (216) Pythagoras, characteristically, replied as

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215-9 Phalaris, ruler of Akragas in Sicily c.570-50 (cf. lln. on chronology) was the archetypal tyrant, alleged to roast victims alive in a bronze bull. As often (cf. 130-1, 167-8, 205-7) I. uses technical terms from different philosophical traditions, which he does not see as conflicting: these are discussed by P. Boyancé, REA 36(1934)321-52, who argues that this section derives from a dialogue *On Justice* by Herakleides of Pontus, C4 BC; de Vogel, appendix D; and Festugière EPG 441-3, who thinks the section was composed by I.. The phrase in 216 translated "the working of the sacred things" (Greek *energeia ton hieron*) could allude to theurgy (see 138n), but could also refer to the effects of sacrifice or mean "the activity of holy beings". Similarly, the connection of heaven and earth at 217 could, but need not, be I's *philia* (see 68-70n). "The power of heaven" (218) as mss (Greek *tou ouranou*); Deubner emends to "the power of the tyrant" (*tou turannou*). Fate (219): *heimarmene*, that which is assigned; Festugière EPG 409-12 on the history of the concept. I. says, *On The Mysteries* 8.7-8, that the human soul has a lower part which depends on the movements of the planetary universe (cf.29-30n and 68-70n), and a higher part which, like the gods, can escape (cf. JH 156-7).

one inspired, utterly truthful and convincing, so that his hearers were won over. Then Phalaris blazed out in anger against Abaris for praising Pythagoras, raged at Pythagoras himself, and went so far as to utter terrible blasphemies, typical of himself, against the very gods. Abaris replied by acknowledging his gratitude to Pythagoras: he learnt from him how everything is ordered and managed from heaven: this is shown in many ways, but especially by the working of the sacred things. He was far from thinking Pythagoras a charlatan for teaching such things: he regarded him with extreme awe, like a god. But Phalaris flatly rejected divination and sacred rites. (217) Abaris shifted the argument from these to what everyone can plainly see. He tried to convince Phalaris, from the experience of divine help in events beyond human control, like irresistible wars and incurable diseases and crop-failures and epidemics and other painful and incurable afflictions, that there is a divine providence which surpasses all human expectation and power. Phalaris brazened it out.

Then Pythagoras, suspecting that Phalaris intended his death but knowing that he was not fated to die at the hands of Phalaris, spoke out with authority. Looking straight at Abaris, he said there was a natural transition from heaven to what is in the air and on the earth. (218) He set out for all to understand how everything follows in the train of heaven, proved beyond doubt that the soul has its own independent power, went on to expound the perfect activity of reason and the mind, then, speaking without constraint, demonstrated that tyranny and all kinds of power that depend on chance, and also injustice and all kinds of human greed, are wholly worthless. Then he gave an inspired exhortation to the best way of life and vigorously denounced its vicious opposite; revealed the true nature of the soul, its powers and its passions; and, best of all, proved that the gods are not responsible for evil: diseases and other bodily afflictions are the offspring of bad conduct. He refuted the mistakes of storytellers and poets. He also refuted the arguments of Phalaris and gave him advice, showing him with factual instances the character and extent of the power of



heaven, and gave many examples of the reasonableness of lawful punishment. He also clearly demonstrated the superiority of humans to other animals, and gave a most expert account of reason in thought and reason expressed, and a complete exposition of mind and the knowledge which comes from it. (219) Moreover, he gave many most useful ethical precepts, derived from all this, on the good things in life, adding prohibitions of what must not be done. Above all, he distinguished what is done by fate from what is done by the mind, and said many wise things about supernatural beings and the immortality of the soul.

But that is another topic: I am concerned here with actions relevant to courage. (220) If, in the midst of danger, he was seen to philosophise with unshaken mind, defending himself in good order and with resolution against fortune, and if he was seen to speak with unchecked freedom to the very man who endangered him, it is evident that he despised what is generally thought terrible, holding such things to be of no importance. And if, in the expectation of death (so far as mortals can tell), he disregarded it entirely and gave no thought to what was then expected, it is obvious that he was entirely without fear of death.

He did still more noble deeds by achieving the overthrow of the tyranny, preventing the tyrant from inflicting intolerable suffering on humanity, and freeing Sicily from its most savage tyranny. (221) There is evidence in the oracles of Apollo that it was he who achieved this. They declared that the rule of Phalaris would be overthrown when its subjects were stronger and more united — and that is what they became when Pythagoras was there, through his advice and teaching. A yet stronger proof is the date: on the very day that Phalaris threatened Pythagoras and Abaris with death, he was himself killed by the conspirators. The story of Epimenides may serve as a further illustration. (222) Epimenides, a disciple of Pythagoras, was about to be killed. He invoked the Erinyes and the gods of

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222 Epimenides: references at 5-8n. The Erinyes (Furies) were invoked by a curse on murderers or oath-breakers.

vengeance, and made his attackers all turn their swords on one another, to their utter destruction. Similarly Pythagoras, defending humanity with the justice and courage of Herakles, for the benefit of humanity punished and sent to his death the man who had treated people with violence and injustice: this was in accordance with the very oracles of Apollo, with which Pythagoras was connected by nature from the very moment of his birth.

I have thought it right to make this much record of Pythagoras' awe-inspiring act of courage. (223) Let us take as a further illustration his preservation of lawful principle: he did only what seemed right to him and was recommended by right reason, and was not diverted by pleasure, effort, emotion or danger. His companions chose to die rather than transgress any of his commandments, and kept the same character free from corruption in all manner of testing circumstances, never straying from their path despite countless misfortunes. They held unfailingly to the principle "always help the law and fight lawlessness", and also to that of keeping self-indulgence at a distance, accustoming themselves from birth to a disciplined and courageous life.

(224) They had songs, too, composed for the emotions which affect the soul: some very helpful against depression and mental anguish, others for anger and indignation. With these they tightened up or relaxed the state of the soul until they achieved the proper tuning for courage. And they had a talisman for nobility: their conviction that sensible people should not think any aspect of the human condition unlikely to happen, but should expect anything which is not within their control.

(225) If anger or grief or any such passion affected them, they got rid of it: each one, by himself, would make a valiant attempt to digest and cure his emotion. They vigorously engaged in the hard work of learning and training, and in the tests for the self-indulgence and greed which is innate in all of us, with the most various chastisements and onslaughts "by fire and sword" carried

out inexorably, sparing neither toil nor perseverance. Valiantly they abstained from all living creatures, and from some other foods, and they worked at alerting the reasoning power and purifying it from its obstructions, and at "holding their peace" and total silence, practised over many years to achieve control of the tongue; all this exercised their courage, as did their intense and unremitting pursuit of the most abstruse theoretical studies, (226) and (for that reason) abstinence from wine and frugality in food and sleep, and their spontaneous detachment from fame and wealth and the like. All these led them on to courage.

The Pythagoreans refrained from bursts of sympathy and tears and everything like that, and also kept aloof from entreaties and supplications and all such slavish flattery, which they thought low and unseemly. It also belongs to this aspect of character that they all, at all times, kept the most important and essential of their beliefs unspoken within themselves. They observed the most careful "holding one's peace" towards outsiders, keeping the doctrines unpublished and unwritten in their memory, and handing them on to their successors like the mysteries of the gods. (227) So, for a long time, no important doctrines became public: they were taught, learned and known only within the walls. If outsiders — the profane, so to speak — were present, the Pythagoreans spoke to each other in riddling symbols. Familiar phrases still bear a trace of this: "don't poke the fire with a knife", and other such, which as they stand sound like old wives' sayings, but when they are expounded offer wonderful and awe-inspiring benefit to those who share them.

(228) But the greatest incitement to courage is to have the highest of all aims: to save and free the mind from the powerful bonds and fetters which constrain it from infancy. Without this, no-one can learn anything sound or true, nor can he see clearly with any kind of perception. According to the Pythagoreans, "mind sees and hears all: the rest are dumb and blind". Next to this is the earnest desire, once one has been fully purified and variously trained in the rites of learning, to pass on and impart some beneficial and spiritual

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228 The quotation is from Epicharmos (fr.249 K): see 166n.

good, not so as to take fright and give up when one moves away from corporeal things, nor yet, when one is led towards the incorporeal, to turn away one's eyes dazzled by its brilliance, nor to be involved in the emotions which nail the soul to the body, but to be undaunted by all the emotions which are concerned with generation and which debase. Training and progress in all these is practice of courage at its highest. Let this much, then, stand as proofs of courage in Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans.

33 On friendship: its quality and extent in Pythagoras himself, how he manifested it to everyone, how many kinds of friendship he established, and what the Pythagoreans did in accordance with their practice.

(229) Pythagoras handed on the clearest of teachings on friendship of all for all: friendship of gods for humans, through piety and worship based on knowledge; friendship of one doctrine for another, and in general of soul for body and the reasoning part for the unreasoning, achieved through philosophy and the contemplation it entails; friendship of people for one another: fellow-citizens through a healthy respect for law, different peoples through a proper understanding of nature, a man with his wife and children and brothers and intimates through unswerving partnership; in short, friendship of all for all, including some of the non-rational animals through justice and natural connection and association; even the mortal body's pacification and reconciliation of opposite powers hidden within itself, through health and a lifestyle and practice of temperance which promotes health, imitating the way in which the cosmic elements flourish. (230) All these may be summed up in that one word "friendship", and Pythagoras is the acknowledged founding father of it all. He handed on to his followers such a remarkable tradition of friendship that even now people say of those who show each other unusual goodwill "They belong to the Pythagoreans".

And we must add Pythagoras' system of education, and the

instructions he gave his disciples. The Pythagoreans ordained that conflict and quarrelling should be abolished from true friendship: from all friendship if possible, but at least from that for one's father and one's elders, and likewise for one's benefactors. If a fit of anger, or some other passion, produces a lasting conflict or quarrel with such people, it damages the existing bond of friendship. (231) Irritation and exasperation should occur as little as possible in friendship: this will come about if both parties know how to give way and to control their tempers, but the younger, and one who holds any of the offices mentioned, should particularly do so. Older men should give younger ones correction and advice (they call it "tuning") only with the greatest tact and circumspection, and affectionate concern should be very obvious in those giving the advice: that way it will be suitable and beneficial. (232) One should never break faith in a friendship, whether in jest or in earnest: it is difficult to restore the bond to health once falsity has affected the characters of the supposed friends. One should not renounce a friendship because of misfortune, or any other life-event which cannot be prevented: the only valid reason for renouncing a friend or a friendship is great and incorrigible vice.

One should never deliberately take on enmity towards those not wholly bad, but having done so one should persevere nobly in the struggle, unless the character of the disagreement changes and goodwill prevails. One should fight not with words but with actions. An enemy is in accord with human and divine law if he fights as one human being with another. So far as is possible, one should never be the cause of a dispute, and should take all possible precautions against its arising.

(233) In a friendship which is to be genuine, there must be many restrictions and conventions, not arbitrary but carefully judged and suited to the individual character, so that no conversation should happen negligently and at random, but with respect, careful thought and proper behaviour, and no passion – like desire or anger – should be aroused by chance, or by low and immoral behaviour. The same applies to other passions and states of mind.

One might guess, from the writings of Aristoxenos, that their declining outside friendships was not merely incidental – they were very resolute in fending them off – nor their keeping their friendship for each other unbending for many generations. Aristoxenos says, in his *On the Pythagorean Life*, that he heard of it from Dionysios the tyrant of Sicily, when he had lost his kingdom and was teaching at a school in Corinth. (234) This is what Aristoxenos says.

“The Pythagoreans fend off bursts of sympathy and tears and everything like that as far as possible, and the same applies to flattery and entreaties and beseeching and anything else of the kind. Dionysios, who was expelled from his tyranny and came to Corinth, often told us about the Pythagoreans Phintias and Damon. This was the story of how a man stood surety for death; and this is how the surety came to be offered. Some of Dionysios’ associates, he said, often mentioned the Pythagoreans, but mocked and disparaged them: they called them boasters, and said their famous dignity and their pretended faithfulness and indifference to pain would soon be knocked out of them if they were really frightened. (235) Others disagreed, and a quarrel arose, so a plan was made against the followers of Phintias.

Dionysios sent for Phintias, and said, in the presence of one of his accusers, that he had been discovered conspiring with others against him; those present bore witness, and showed most convincing anger. Phintias was astonished at the charge. But when Dionysios said outright that it was clearly proved, and Phintias must die, Phintias said that if Dionysios had so resolved, he asked for the rest of the day to settle his own affairs and those of Damon. These men lived together and shared everything, but Phintias, as the elder, had taken most of the

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233 Aristoxenos was a musicologist (he analysed music by intervals of perceived sound, not by Pythagorean ratios) who came from Taras in South Italy. His father knew the Pythagorean Archytas (see 127n) and he himself knew the last generation of Italian Pythagoreans, and also Dionysius II of Syracuse. His preference appears to have been for an enlightened, intellectual P., who opposed tyranny (see Vatai, 22-3, and Cox 10-11). See also 101n.

household cares on himself. So he asked to be released for that purpose, naming Damon as his surety.

(236) Dionysios said he had been amazed, and had asked if there was really a man who would stand surety for a death penalty. Phintias said there was; Damon was sent for, and when he heard what had happened said he would stand surety and remain there until Phintias returned. Dionysios said he himself was astonished, but the others, who had initiated the test, jeered at Damon, saying he would be left in the lurch –and, they mocked, a deer had been substituted for the victim. As the sun was setting Phintias returned to die. Everyone was astounded and subjected. Dionysios, he said, flung his arms around them and kissed them and asked to make a third in their friendship, but they would make no such agreement, despite his entreaties. (237) Aristoxenos says he had this from Dionysios himself.

It is also said that Pythagoreans, even if they did not know each other, would try to do acts of friendship for people they had never set eyes on, when they had evidence of their sharing the same beliefs. From such actions this principle too won credence: good men are friends, though they live at opposite ends of the earth, before they have met or spoken to each other.

A Pythagorean, they say, on a long and lonely journey, stayed at an inn. From exhaustion, and for many other reasons, he succumbed to a long and serious illness, and his resources were used up. (238) But the innkeeper, whether from compassion or from liking, supplied him with everything, grudging neither service nor expense. When the disease worsened, the man, accepting death, wrote a secret sign on a writing-tablet, and told the innkeeper that if his end came, he was to set up the tablet by the road, and see if some passer-by would recognise the sign. That person would repay what the innkeeper had spent on him, and return the favour on his behalf. The innkeeper, after his death, buried the body with all due care, but had no expectation of getting back what he had spent, still less of benefitting from

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236 Deer: as in some versions of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia (another innocent victim).

someone who recognised the tablet. But, eager to try out the instructions, he did regularly put the tablet out to be seen. Much later, a Pythagorean was passing by. He stopped, realised who had made the sign, found out what had happened, and paid the innkeeper much more than he had spent.

(239) They say too that Kleinias of Taras, finding that Proros of Cyrene, a disciple of Pythagoras, risked losing all his property, got money together and sailed to Cyrene to put Proros' affairs to rights, disregarding the diminution of his own property and undaunted by the danger of the voyage. Thestor of Poseidonia, having only heard it said that Thymarides of Paros was a Pythagorean, did likewise: when it came about that Thymarides was reduced from great affluence to poverty, Thestor collected a large sum, sailed to Paros and restored his fortunes.

(240) These are excellent and appropriate instances of friendship, but much more awe-inspiring were their accounts of sharing divine goods, of concord in the mind, and of the divine soul. They often urged each other not to tear apart the god within them: for all this zeal for friendship, in act and word, aimed at merging and uniting with the god, and at community of mind and of the divine soul. No-one could find anything, whether spoken in words or put into practice, which is better than this, and I think all the goods of friendship are included within it. Now we have summed up all the excellences of Pythagorean friendship, and we say no more about it.

34 Miscellaneous sayings and actions of Pythagoras and his followers in philosophy, not mentioned in the sections on particular virtues.

(241) We have now discussed, in order and under separate heads, Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans: now let us have the "miscellaneous" examples, which do not fit our stated plan.

The Pythagoreans told all those Greeks who came to share their fellowship to use their native speech: they disapproved of

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241 Messapii (as in 197), Lucani and Peucetii were South Italian peoples, absorbed into the Roman confederacy C3 BC. For Epicharmos see 166n.



speaking in foreign tongues. But foreigners also came to the Pythagorean school, from the Messapians, Leukanians, Peuketians and Romans. Metrodorus, brother of Thyrsos, brought to medicine much of the teaching of his father Epicharmos, and that of Pythagoras. In reporting his father's discourses to his brother, he says that Epicharmos, like Pythagoras before him, thought the best form of speech, like the best mode in music, was the Doric. Ionic and Aeolic had a tinge of the chromatic, and Attic was saturated with it, (242) but Doric was enharmonic, composed of notes which sound clearly. Both antiquity and myth give their testimony for Doric. Nereus married Doris daughter of Ocean, and to him was born, so the story goes, the fifty daughters, one of whom was mother to Achilles. Some say Doros was the son of Deukalion son of Prometheus and of Pyrrha daughter of Epimetheus; Doros' son was Hellen, and his son was Aiolos. But the sacred books of Babylon say Hellen was the son of Zeus, and his sons were Doros, Xuthos and Aiolos, and Hesiod himself followed this indication. (243) Whichever is right — it is not easy for later generations to get exact knowledge of antiquity — both versions agree in making Doric the oldest of the dialects; then Aeolic, taking its name from Aiolos; third Attic, named from Atthis daughter of Kranaos; fourth Ionic, named from Ion son of Xuthos and of Kreousa daughter of Erechtheus, and dated three generations after the earlier story of the Thracian wind and the rape of Oreithyia, as most historians say. Orpheus, the oldest of the poets, used Doric.

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241-3 For the musical modes, see 115-21n. The antiquity of Doric: an odd display of erudition. Nereus was the Old Man of the Sea; his daughters the Nereids included Thetis, mother of Achilles. Deukalion and Pyrrha were the parents of humanity after Zeus sent a great flood. The Hesiod reference is fr.9 Merkelbach-West (*Fragmenta Hesiodica*, 1967). Kranaos was king of Athens at the time of the flood (which should make his daughter Atthis the same generation as Doros in the Deukalion version). Oreithyia, carried off by Boreas, was generally said to be a daughter of Erechtheus, like Kreousa.

(244) In medicine, their particular tradition is concern for dietetics, which they have brought to a fine art. First they tried to learn the signs of proportion in food, drink and rest, and then they were almost the first to concern themselves with regulating the preparation of food. Pythagoreans made more use of fomentations than their predecessors, and thought less highly of the branch of medicine concerned with drugs; among these, they made most use of those which treat ulcers, and absolutely rejected surgery and cautery. They also used incantations to treat some illnesses.

(245) They are said to deprecate those who peddle doctrines, and open up souls, like the doors of a public house, to all who come; and if they cannot find a buyer that way, foist themselves on the cities, contract for all the gymnasia and the young men together, and get paid for worthless material. But Pythagoras concealed most of what he had to say, so that those who were trained and purified could share with him, and the others, as Homer says of Tantalos, suffer because the teachings are all around, yet they cannot profit by them. They also say, I think, about not teaching students for money, that those who do are worse than ordinary craftsmen sitting at a bench. The craftsmen, if someone commissions a herm, look for wood suited to the carving of the figure: but the others try to construct the practice of virtue from any nature which lies to hand. (246) They say one should take more care over philosophy than over parents or farming. Parents and farmers are the cause of our living, but philosophers and teachers are the cause of our living well and with intelligence, for they have discovered the proper management of affairs.

Pythagoras did not see fit to speak or write so that his thoughts should be apparent to any chance comer: the first thing he taught his students was to be pure from all loss of control and to guard in silence the words they heard. The first man to reveal the nature of symmetry and asymmetry to those unworthy to

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244 see 163-4n.

245Homer *Odyssey* 11.582-92.

share the teachings was so much detested, they say, that not only was he excluded from their common life and meals, but they built him a tomb, as if their former companion had left human life behind. (247) Some say the supernatural power took revenge on those who published Pythagoras' teachings. The man who revealed the construction of the "twenty-angled shape" was drowned at sea like a blasphemer. (He told how to make a dodecahedron, one of the "five solid figures", into a sphere.) Some say this fate befell the man who told about irrationality and incommensurability.

The entire Pythagorean training was distinctive and symbolic, resembling riddles and puzzles, at least in its sayings, because of its archaic style — just as the Delphic oracles, which are really divine, seem obscure and hard to follow to those who casually consult the oracle. That is a selection of the miscellaneous stories about Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans.

35 The rising against the Pythagoreans, where Pythagoras was at the time, and why tyrannical and guilty men attacked them.

(248) There were some who made war on the Pythagoreans and rose against them. It is agreed by all that the plot occurred in the absence of Pythagoras, but people differ about which journey it was: some say he was visiting Pherekydes of Syros, others that he had gone to Metapontion. Several reasons are

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247 cf.88. The five geometrical solids are cube, pyramid, dodecahedron, octahedron, icosahedron (Plato, *Timaeus* 53e5-55c6), identified with the four elements and the aether which surrounds the earth (or, by Plato, with the four elements and the "sphere of the all", cf.88). Irrationality: the problem is that the diagonal of a square is the hypotenuse of the right-angled triangle formed by any two sides of the square. If the sides of the square are thought of as 1, the square on the hypotenuse is  $1 \text{ squared} + 1 \text{ squared} = 2 \text{ squared}$ . So the side of the square on the hypotenuse is the square root of 2: but there is no rational number which can be multiplied by itself to make 2. It follows that the diagonal of any square is irrational and incommensurable with the side of the square (that is, it cannot be put into a ratio with the side). This sounds like a disaster for Pythagorean insistence on all-governing ratios, but there is no consensus that Hippasos, or any other early Pythagorean, raised the problem. See Philip appendix 2.

given for the plot. One is that it was the work of the "Kylonians", as follows.

Kylon was a Krotoniate, and the leading citizen in birth, fame and wealth; in other respects he was harsh, violent, disruptive and tyrannical in character. He had been very anxious to share the Pythagorean life and had applied to Pythagoras himself, then an old man, but was turned down for the reasons given. (249) Thereupon he and his friends began a vigorous fight against Pythagoras and his companions. His self-esteem, like that of his allies, was so violent and uncontrolled that he was affronted by every single Pythagorean. That was why Pythagoras went away to Metapontion, where, it is said, his life ended. But the "Kylonians" continued their faction-fight against the Pythagoreans, manifesting all kinds of hostility.

Pythagorean excellence, and the wish of the cities themselves to be administered by them, prevailed for a time. But finally the conspirators went so far that, when the Pythagoreans were meeting in the house of Milon in Kroton, debating political

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248-64 As usual, there are chronological problems about the revolt. It is quite possible that two episodes are conflated, or several episodes exaggerated. The historical background is discussed by Vatai 53-9, with references to earlier material: the evidence is generally shaky. Herodotus visited Thourioi (see 264) in the 440s, but says nothing about these events. Polybius 2.39.1 describes the revolt, because he is interested in mediation by his native Achaia, mother-city of many South Italian colonies (263), but he does not date it: see F.L. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary On Polybius I* (1957) 222-5. The three versions I. gives are by Aristoxenos (see 233n); Nicomachos of Gerasa (Jerash), a mathematical philosopher of the C2 AD; and Apollonius of Tyana, the wonder-worker of the C2 AD (see Introduction n.11). If Aristoxenos (249-51) is right that Lysis escaped the fire because he was young, and later taught Epaminondas of Thebes (born c.410 BC), the fire can scarcely be dated before c.450 BC. Similarly, Echekrates (251), one of the "last generation", appears in Plato's *Phaedo*, which has a dramatic date of 399 BC and a setting in Phlius (cf. 251) in Achaia, and also mentions Pythagoreans in Thebes. But a revolt over the distribution of land conquered from Sybaris (255, Apollonius's version) should be c.510 BC; at 74 Kylon is "exarch" (commander) of Sybaris. DL 8.39-40, and Porphyry *Life of P.* 56-7, cite versions (against 248) in which P. was not absent: he escaped the fire, but died a voluntary death, or as a fugitive.

249 Milon won six Olympic victories in succession, from 532 BC on; like Herakles, whose priest he was, a man of immense strength and proverbial appetite — a most unlikely Pythagorean.

matters, they set fire to the house and burnt all the Pythagoreans except two, Archippos and Lysis: they were the youngest and strongest and somehow fought their way out. (250) After this event the cities showed no concern for the atrocity, and the Pythagoreans ended their supervision, for both reasons: the disregard of the cities (which made no response to so extensive and appalling a disaster), and the loss of those best suited to govern. The two who survived both came from Taras. Archippos returned there, but Lysis, offended by the cities' neglect, left for Greece and lived for a time in Achaia in the Peloponnese; then he moved to Thebes, where there was enthusiasm, and where Epaminondas became his pupil and called him father. There his life ended. (251) The other Pythagoreans assembled at Rhegion and lived there together. As time went on, and governments worsened, they left Italy, except for Archytas of Taras. The most committed were Phanton, Echekrates, Polymnastos and Diokles of Phlious, and Xenophilos of Chalkis in Thrace. They maintained the original customs and doctrines, though the school was diminishing, until they died out with dignity.

This is what Aristoxenos says. Nicomachos agrees in most respects, but says the conspiracy occurred when Pythagoras was abroad: (252) he had travelled to Delos to nurse and care for his former teacher Pherekydes of Syros, who had fallen ill of the disease called phtheiriasis. Then those the Pythagoreans had given up as hopeless, and exposed to ridicule, attacked them and set them on fire everywhere— they were stoned to death by the Italians for this, and cast out unburied. That is when the knowledge was lost together with those who had it, for it had been kept, unspoken, within their breasts until that time, and all that outsiders could remember was hard to understand and lacked explanation, with a very few exceptions preserved—like sparks, faint and hard to catch—by people who had been abroad at the time. (253) And these people, left solitary and deeply

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251 The mss. have "left Italy, except for Archytas" after "the other Pythagoreans": this transposition, by E. Rohde (see von Fritz appendix A), not only makes better sense, but allows for Archytas as governor of Taras in 362 (see 127n). Other scholars have suspected lacunae (as in Deubner's text, after "worsened").

dejected by what had happened, dispersed and could not bear to share their doctrine with any human being. They lived alone in desert places found by chance, shutting themselves in, each one best pleased with his own company. But, fearing that the name of philosophy might be wholly lost to humanity, and that the gods would hate them if they allowed so great a gift to be quite destroyed, they composed brief, symbolic accounts, putting together the writings of older men and what they themselves remembered, and then each left this in the place where he happened to die, charging sons or daughters or wives not to give it to anyone outside the household. And the households kept these writings safe for a very long time, each generation laying the same charge on its descendants.

(254) Apollonius disagrees on some points, and adds much that the others do not say, so let us also give his account of the conspiracy against the Pythagoreans. He says that other people were resentful of Pythagoras from their childhood. People liked him when he talked to all comers, but when he associated only with his disciples he lost their regard. They acquiesced in being surpassed by an outsider, but they resented their countrymen who seemed to have the advantage, and suspected that the association was against their own interests. Then, since the young men came from families distinguished for wealth and reputation, as they grew older they took the lead not only in their private lives, but in running the city; they had a powerful group of supporters (they were more than three hundred) but were a small part of the city, which was not governed by the same customs and practices as they were.

(255) While they held their original territory, and Pythagoras lived there, they kept the constitution dating from

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253 "alone in desert places" does not occur in the parallel passage in Porphyry, *Life Of P.* 58, and may be another instance of rivalry with Christian asceticism (Burkert SD 13) which I. might have encountered in the Syrian desert. For the importance of lonely places, see Porphyry, *On Abstinence* 1.36.1, and Fowden 56-9. DL 8.45 says the family traditions lasted 9-10 generations.

254 The mss. have "envy followed them", i.e. people resented the Pythagoreans, not (as Deubner) P..

the foundation, but people disliked it, and sought an occasion for change. But when they defeated Sybaris, and Pythagoras left, and they arranged that the captured territory should not be divided into lots as the majority wished, the silent hatred broke out, and the majority joined the opposition to the Pythagoreans. The leaders of the opposition were those most closely linked to the Pythagoreans by family and friendship, for they, like most people, disliked much of what the Pythagoreans did, as being peculiar and different from what others did; but they also felt most strongly that the loss of privilege was an affront to them alone.

For instance, no Pythagorean ever named Pythagoras: when they wanted to refer to him in his lifetime, they said "the godlike one", and after his death "that man", as Homer makes Eumaios refer to Odysseus:

"I cannot bring myself to name him stranger, though he is not here: he loved me greatly and cared for me."

(256) Likewise, Pythagoreans did not rise from their beds after the sun rose, and would not wear a ring with an image of a god: they would watch for sunrise to pray to the sun as it rose, and would not wear such a ring lest it come into contact with a bier or with some unclean place. They would do nothing without prior consideration and later assessment: in the morning they would decide what was to be done, and would reckon up into the night what action they had taken, training memory and assessment together. Similarly, if one of those who shared the way of life told another to meet him in a particular place, he would wait there for him to come through day and night. Pythagoreans were trained to remember what was said and to say nothing at random; (257) they had their orders even to death. He told them not to blaspheme at the last, but, as when setting out to sea, to seek the omens in the silence they maintained when crossing the Adriatic. Such things, as I said, annoyed everyone, in as much as they saw the Pythagoreans behaving in their own way among them, though they had been educated together. Then their kinsfolk were even more angry and offended, because the Pythagoreans gave the right hand only to Pythagoreans, not to any

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255 Homer *Odyssey* 14.145-6.

other relation except to their parents, and because they treated their property as common to Pythagoreans and alienated from their kin. So when their kinsfolk started the disagreement, others readily lapsed into hostility. Hippias and Diodoros and Theages, members of the Thousand, spoke in favour of everyone sharing in office and in the assembly, and of office-holders rendering account to people selected by lot from the whole citizen body. The Pythagoreans Alkimachos, Deinarchos, Meton and Demokedes opposed this, and resisted the destruction of the ancestral constitution: but those who were advocates for the masses won. (258) After this the people assembled, and Kylon and Ninon, sharing out the speeches, were the speakers who denounced the Pythagoreans: one from the rich and one from the popular party. Kylon's speech went on for a long time; then Ninon took the floor, claiming that he had investigated Pythagorean secrets, though in fact he had invented and written down what would most effectively damage their reputation. He gave this book to the clerk, and told him to read it out. (259) Its title was "Sacred Book", but the contents were of this kind:

"Reverence the friends like gods, but handle others like wild beasts. The disciples say exactly this in verse, remembering Pythagoras: 'His companions he thought equal to the blessed gods, the rest he left out of the reckoning'. (260) Praise Homer especially for his saying "shepherd of the people", for it is oligarchic, showing the others to be cattle. Fight against beans, for they are lords of the lot, and of putting into office those chosen by lot. Seek for tyranny, for we argue that it is better to be a bull for one day than a cow for all time. Approve the customs of others, but tell them to use those we recognise."

In all, Ninon argued that Pythagorean philosophy was a conspiracy against the people, and urged his audience not even to let them speak as advisers, remembering that they would

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257 Seeking omens: see further Boyancé (45n.)140-4. Opponents: von Fritz 57 thinks Theages here = Litates 263; others think there are two distinct phases of conflict. Demokedes: see 261-2n.

259 The Sacred Book: see 90n.



never have come to the assembly at all had the Pythagoreans persuaded the Thousand to ratify their advice. Those who had been prevented from hearing others, while the Pythagoreans were in power, should not allow Pythagoreans to speak. Their right hands, which the Pythagoreans had rejected, should be hostile to Pythagoreans when they voted by show of hands or picked up a ballot. They should think it a disgrace for those who overcame three hundred thousand people, by the Tetraeis river, to be overpowered by a rival faction in their own city numbering only a thousandth part of that.

(261) Ninon's slanders made his audience so savage that a few days later, when the Pythagoreans were sacrificing to the Muses in a house beside the Pythion, they assembled in force, in the mood to make an attack. The Pythagoreans saw it coming: some took refuge in an inn, Demokedes and the ephebes withdrew to Plateai. The people overthrew the laws and passed resolutions in which they accused Demokedes of forming a conspiracy of young men aiming at tyranny, and proclaimed a reward of three talents for whoever killed him. There was a battle, and Theages averted the danger from Demokedes, so they assigned him the three talents from the city. (262) Things were very bad in the city and the countryside, and the exiles issued a challenge to a trial, with three cities—Taras, Metapontion and Kaulonia—as arbitrators. Those sent to make a decision were paid, and resolved (as was entered in Krotoniate records) to exile the guilty men. Those victorious in the trial exiled in addition all who were dissatisfied with the government, and also the families of the exiles, asserting that one must not impiously divide children from their parents. They also cancelled debts and redistributed the land.

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260 Herodotus, 5.44-5, mentions the battle but not the river Tetraeis.

261-2 Demokedes: perhaps the physician who worked for Polykrates of Samos and Atossa queen of Persia (Herodotus 3.129-37) or a relative. Ephebes: young men aged 18-20, often enrolled for military training or frontier service. Minar (57-60, 81) argues that I. has left out material on Pythagorean recovery after a first revolt. It is not clear whether the payment (262) was a bribe.

(263) Many years later, when the followers of Deinarchos had died in another battle, and Litates, the most energetic leader of the rebels, was dead too, there was a change of feeling and a sense of compassion, and they decided to bring back the surviving exiles. They sent for envoys from Achaia who came to an agreement with the exiles on their behalf, and recorded the oaths at Delphi. (264) There were about sixty Pythagoreans who returned, not counting the older men; some of them had taken to the medical profession, caring for the sick by a prescribed regimen, and they became the leaders of the return. Those who were restored were highly regarded by the ordinary people (it is said that the proverb "These are not Ninon's times", applied to those who break the law, arose at this time); and when the Thourians invaded they came to the rescue, shared the danger and died. Then the city reversed its views so completely that, as well as the praises lavished on the Pythagoreans, they decided that the festival would be more pleasing to the Muses if they celebrated a public sacrifice at the Mouseion, which they had earlier founded, on Pythagorean advice, to worship the goddesses. So much, then, for the attack on the Pythagoreans.

36 The death of Pythagoras; his successors, and the names of the men and women who followed his tradition in philosophy.

(265) It is agreed that Aristaios, son of Damophon of Kroton, was Pythagoras' heir in everything. He lived in Pythagoras' own time, about seven generations before Plato, and was found worthy not only to lead the school, but to marry Theano and bring up the children, because of his exceptional grasp of the teachings. Pythagoras himself is said to have led the school for thirty-nine years; he lived almost a hundred years in all, and Aristaios was very old when he took over the school. The leader after him was Mnesarchos son of Pythagoras, and he handed it on to Boulagoras, in whose time Kroton was sacked. Gartydas of Kroton succeeded

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263 Thourioi: a Panhellenic colony (i.e. settlers were invited from all Greek cities) founded after the destruction of New Sybaris: see Walbank (o.c. 248-64n) 225 for chronology.

him, having returned from abroad, where he had gone before the war, but he died because of the sufferings of his country. He was the only one who died of grief before his time;(266) other Pythagoreans were very old when they were freed, so to speak, from the fetters of the body. Later on Aresas came from the Leukanians, where friends had kept him safe, to reestablish the school. Diodorus of Aspendos came to him, and was accepted because of the lack of men in the fellowship. He returned to Greece, and handed on the Pythagorean sayings there. Committed Pythagoreans were Kleinias and Philolaos at Herakleia, Theorides and Eurytos at Metapontion, and Archytas at Taras. Epicharmos was also one of the hearers from outside, but did not belong to the fellowship. When he went to Syracuse he refrained from philosophising openly, because of the tyranny of Hieron, but he versified Pythagorean thought, conveying Pythagoras' teachings under the guise of amusement.

(267) It is only to be expected that many Pythagoreans are unknown and unrecorded, but here are the names of those who are known:

From Kroton: Hippostratos, Dymas, Aigon, Haimon, Syllos, Kleosthenes, Agelas, Episylos, Phykiadas, Ekphantos, Timaios, Bouthos, Eratos, Itanaïos, Rhodippos, Bryas, Euandros, Myllias, Antimedon, Ageas, Leophron, Agylos, Onatas, Hipposthenes, Kleophron, Alkmaion, Damokles, Milon, Menon.

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265 Diodoros of Aspendos (early C4 BC) had much in common with the Cynic philosophers who believed in living according to nature (that is, without the trappings of civilisation); the C4 comedy Pythagorean is of this type. Sources in Burkert LS 202-4.

266 "Committed Pythagoreans": Deubner (o.c.Introduction n. 14, 685) has *zelotas de graphein genesthai*, which does not, I think, make sense (cf.Burkert, *Gnomon* 37(1965)24-6). I have a omitted *graphein*, which may be a mistake for *grapei*, "the source writes". For the contrast between *zelotai* and *akroatai* see 80n.

267 Many of these people are unknown, and others have very doubtful Pythagorean connections. On the Pythagorean women see Sarah B.Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt* (1984) 61-5 and Mary Ellen Waithe (ed.) *A History of Women Philosophers* I(1987) chs.1-4. Brontinos

From Metapontion: Brontinos, Parmiskos, Orestadas, Leon, Damarmenos, Aineas, Cheilas, Melesias, Aristetas, Laphaon, Euandios, Agesidamos, Xenokades, Euryphemos, Aristomenes, Agesarchos, Alkias, Xenophantes, Thraseas, Eurytos, Epiphron, Eiriskos, Megistias, Leokydes, Thrasymedes, Euphemos, Prokles, Antimenos, Lakritos, Damotages, Pyrrhon, Rhexibios, Alopekos, Astylos, Lakydas, Haniochos, Lakrates, Glykinos.

From Akragas: Empedocles.

From Elea: Parmenides.

From Taras: Philolaos, Eurytos, Archytas, Theodoros, Aristippos, Lykon, Hestaios, Polemarchos, Asteas, Kainias, Kleon, Eurymedon, Arkeas, Kleinagoras, Archippos, Zopyros, Euthynos, Dikaiarchos, Philonides, Phrontidas, Lysis, Lysibios, Deinokrates, Echekrates, Paktion, Akousiladas, Ikkos, Peisikrates, Klearatos, Leonteus, Phrynichos, Simichias, Aristokleidas, Kleinias, Habroteles, Peisirrhodos, Bryas, Helandros, Archemachos, Mimnomachos, Akmonidas, Dikas, Karophantidas.

From Sybaris: Metopos, Hippasos, Proxenos, Euanor, Leanax, Menestor, Diokles, Empedos, Timasios, Polemaios, Endios, Tyrsenos.

From Carthage: Miltiades, Anthes, Hodios, Leokritos.

From Paros: Aietios, Phainekles, Dexitheos, Alkimachos, Deinarchos, Meton, Timaios, Timesianax, Eumoiros, Thymaridas.

From Lokroi: Gytios, Xenon, Philodamos, Euetes, Eudikos, Sthenonidas, Sosistratos, Euthynous, Zaleukos, Timares.

From Posidonia: Athamas, Simos, Proxenos, Kranaos, Myes, Bathylaos, Phaidon.

Leukanians: the brothers Okkelos and Okkilos, Aresandros, Kerambos.

Dardanian: Malion.

Argives: Hippomedon, Timosthenes, Euelthon, Thrasydamos, Kriton, Polyktor.

Laonians: Autocharidas, Kleanor, Eurykrates.

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was credited with an Orphic poem, West 216; at 132 his wife is Deino, here Theano. Ocellus: the pseudepigrapha include a treatise *On Universal Nature*, and correspondence with Plato and Archytas. See R. Harder, *Ocellus Lucanus* (1926); H. Thesleff, *Eranos* 60(1962)8-36.

Hyperborean: Abaris.

From Rhegion: Aristeides, Demosthenes, Aristokrates, Phytios, Helikaion, Mnesiboulos, Hipparchides, Euthosion, Euthykles, Opsimos, Kalais, Selinountios.

From Syracuse: Leptines, Phintias, Damon.

From Samos: Melissos, Lakon, Archippos, Helorippos, Heloris, Hippon.

From Kaulonia: Kallimbrotos, Dikon, Nastas, Drymon, Xeneas.

From Phlious: Diokles, Echekrates, Polymnastos, Phanton.

From Sikyon: Poliades, Demon, Stratios, Sosthenes.

From Cyrene: Proros, Melanippos, Aristangelos, Theodoros.

From Kyzikos: Pythodoros, Hipposthenes, Boutheros, Xenophilos.

From Katana: Charondas, Lysiades.

From Corinth: Chrysippos.

Etruscan: Nausithoos.

From Athens: Neokritos.

From Pontos: Lynamnos.

Total 218.

These are the most famous Pythagorean women: Timycha wife of Myllias of Kroton, Philtys daughter of Theophris of Kroton and sister of Byndakos, the sisters Okkelo and Ekkelo from Leukania, Cheilonis daughter of Chilon the Lacedaemonian, Kratesikleia of Laconia wife of Kleanor the Lacedaemonian, Theano wife of Brontinos of Metapontion, Myia wife of Milon of Kroton, Lasthenia of Arcadia, Habroteleia daughter of Habroteles of Taras, Echekrateia of Phleious, Tyrsenis of Sybaris, Peisirrode of Taras, Thedousa of Lakonia, Boio of Argos, Babelyka of Argos, Kleaichma sister of Autocharidas of Lakonia. Total 17.

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## INDEX OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

Numbers refer to paragraphs. The list in 267 is not indexed.

Abaris 90-3, 135-6, 138, 140-1, 147, 215-7, 221

Achaia 250, 263

Aglaophamos 146

Akragas 33

Alkaios 170

Alkimachos 257

Alkmaion 104

Anaximander 11

Anchitos 113

Androkydes 145

Ankaios 3-4

Aphrodite 152

Apollo 5-8, 52, 133, 152, 177, 208, 221

Genetor 25, 35

Hyperborean 30, 91, 135-6, 140

Paion 30, 208

Pythios 9, 30, 52, 161

Apollonios 254

Arcadia 3

Archemoros 52

Archippos 249-50

Archytas 104, 127, 160, 197, 251, 266

Aresas 266

Aristaios 104, 265

Aristeas 138

Aristokrates 130, 172

Aristotle 31

Aristoxenos 233-4, 237, 251

Asklepios 126, 208

Athens 39, 42

Babylon 19

Bias 11

Bitale 146

Boulagoras 265

Brontinos 132

Bryson 104

Byblos 14

Calypso 57

Carmel 14-5

Carthage 128

Charondas 33, 104, 130, 172

Chaldaeans 151, 158  
 Chalkis 3, 8, 251  
 Corinth 233  
 Crete 25, 92  
 Cyrene 239  
 Damo 146  
 Damon 127, 234-6  
 Deinarchos 257, 263  
 Deino 132  
 Delos 25, 35, 184, 252  
 Delphi 5, 56, 82, 263  
 Demeter 170  
 Demokedes 257, 261  
 Dike 46  
 Diodoros 257, 266  
 Diokles 251  
 Dion 189, 199  
 Dionysios 189-94, 233-7  
 Dioskouroi 155  
 Diospolis 12  
 Dodona 56  
 Doros 242  
 Echekrates 251  
 Egypt 12-19, 103, 151, 158  
 Eleusis 75, 151  
 Empedokles 67, 104, 113, 135-6, 166  
 Epaminondas 250  
 Epicharmos 166, 241, 266  
 Epidaurios 3  
 Epimenides 7, 104, 135, 221-2  
 Eratokles 25  
 Eryxias 35  
 Eros 52  
 Etruria 127, 142  
 Euboulos 127  
 Eudoxos 7  
 Euphorbos 63  
 Eurymenes 189-92  
 Euryphamos 185  
 Eurytos 104, 139, 148, 266  
 Galatians 173  
 Gartydas 265  
 Genetor see Apollo  
 Getae 173

Hades 123, 155, 178  
 Helikaon 130, 172  
 Hephaistos 39  
 Hera 39, 50, 56, 61, 63, 185  
 Herakleitos 173  
 Herakles 40, 50, 152, 155, 222  
 Hesiod III, 164  
 Himera 33  
 Hipparchos 75  
 Hippasos 81, 88, 104, 257  
 Hippobotos 189  
 Hippodamas 82  
 Hippomedon 87  
 Homer 11, 39, 63, 113, 164, 245, 255  
 Hyperboreans see Abaris; Apollo  
 Iberia 151  
 Imbros 151  
 Ion 243  
 Ionia 88  
 Italy 28, 33, 50, 52, 57, 88, 129, 133, 134, 166, 184, 251  
 Kambyses 19  
 Katana 33, 130, 172  
 Kaulonia 142, 262  
 Kelts 151  
 Kephallenia 3  
 Kleinias 127, 198, 239, 266  
 Knossos 92  
 Kore 56  
 Kreophylos 9, 11  
 Kroton 29, 33, 36, 122, 126, 132-3, 142-3, 150, 170,  
 177, 248-9, 265  
 Kylon 74, 248-58  
 Lakedaimon 92, 141, 193  
 Lakinios 50  
 Latins 152  
 Lemnos 151  
 Leukanians (Lucani) 241, 266  
 Leukippos 104  
 Libethra 146  
 Linus 139  
 Litates 263  
 Lokroi (Epizephyrii) 33, 172  
 (Opuntian) 42  
 Lysis 75, 104, 185, 249-50

Melikertes 52  
 Memphis 12  
 Menon 170  
 Messapians 197, 241  
 Messene 127  
 Metapontion 81, 134, 136, 142, 170, 189, 248, 262, 266  
 Meton 257  
 Metrodoros 241  
 Midas 143  
 Miletos 11  
 Miltiades 128  
 Milon 104, 249  
 Minos 27  
 Mnesarchos 4-9, 25, 146, 265  
 Mochos 14  
 Muses 45, 50, 170, 264  
 Mycenae 63  
 Myllias 143, 189-94  
 Nausithoos 127  
 Neanthes 189  
 Nemea 52  
 Nessos 134  
 Nicomachos 251  
 Nile 158  
 Ninon 258-62  
 Odysseus 57, 255  
 Olympia 40, 44, 62  
 Orpheus 62, 145-7, 151, 243  
 Paian, Paion see Apollo  
 Pangaion 146  
 Panthoos 63  
 Parthenis 6  
 Parmenides 166  
 Paros 239  
 Patroklos 63  
 Perillos 74  
 Penelope 57  
 Peucetians 241  
 Phalaris 215-7, 221  
 Phanai 190  
 Phanton 251  
 Pherekydes 9, 11, 184, 248, 252  
 Philolaos 104, 139, 148, 199, 266  
 Phintias 127, 234-6

Phlious 251  
 Phoenicia 7, 14, 158  
 Phytios 130, 172  
 Plato 70, 127, 131, 167, 199, 265  
 Pluto 46, 123  
 Polykrates 11, 88  
 Polymnastos 251  
 Poseidonia 239  
 Posides 128  
 Priene 11  
 Proros 127, 239  
 Pythagoras the athlete 21-5  
 Pythais 4-6  
 Pythias see Phintias  
 Rhegion 33, 130, 172, 251  
 Romans 241  
 Samos 3-4, 9-10, 19-25, 26, 28, 30, 88  
 Samothrace 151  
 Sicily 33, 129, 133, 134, 220, 233  
 Sidon 7, 13  
 Sirens 82  
 Sparta 25, 170  
 Spintharos 197  
 Sybaris 33, 36, 74, 133, 142, 177, 255  
 Syllos 150  
 Syracuse 266  
 Syria 5, 14, 16  
 Taras (Tarentum) 61, 189, 250, 262, 266  
 Tauromenion 33, 112, 134, 136  
 Telauges 146  
 Thales 11, 14  
 Theages 257, 261  
 Theaitetos 172  
 Theano 132, 146, 265  
 Thebes 250  
 Themis 46  
 Theokles 130  
 Theorides 266  
 Thessaly 3  
 Thestor 239  
 Thourioi (Thurii) 264  
 Thrace 243, 251  
 Thymarides 104, 145, 239  
 Timaratos 172

Timares 130

Timycha 189, 192-4, 214

Trallians 173

Tyre 14

Xenokrates 7

Xenophilos 251

Zaleukos 33, 104, 130, 172

Zalmoxis 104, 173

Zeus 3, 27, 46, 155